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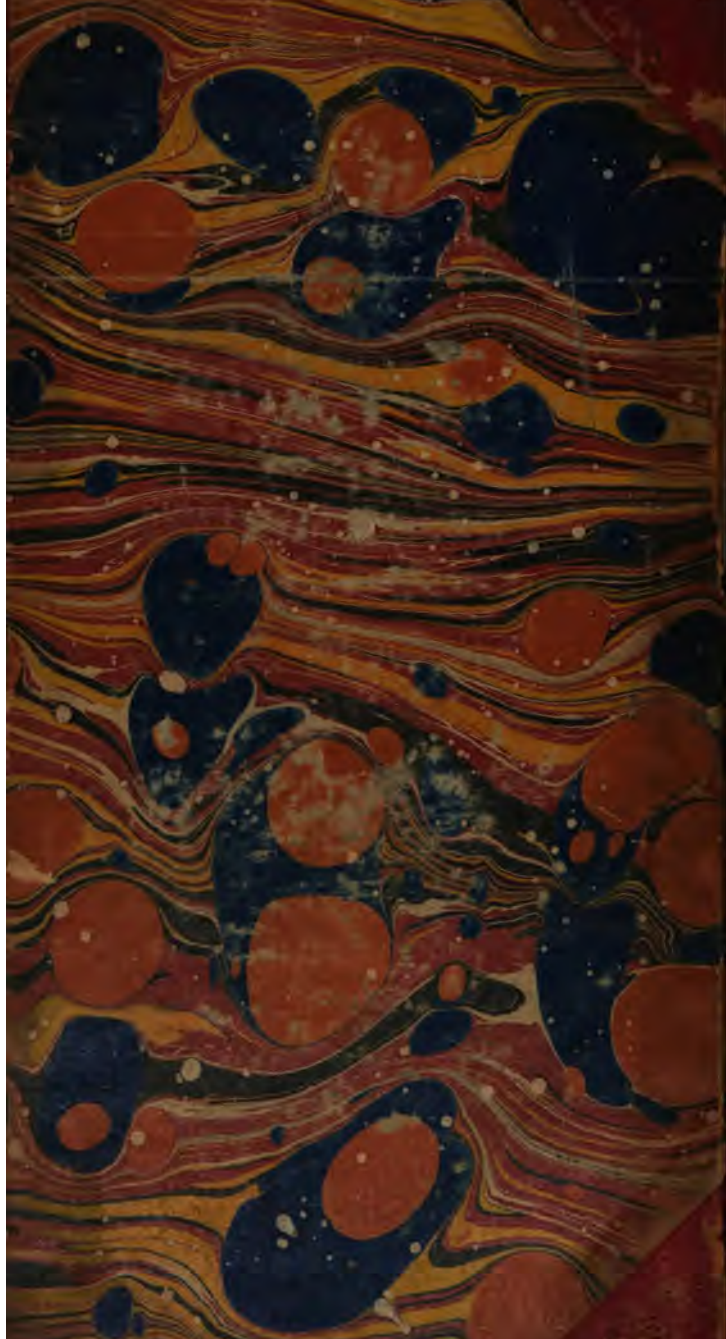
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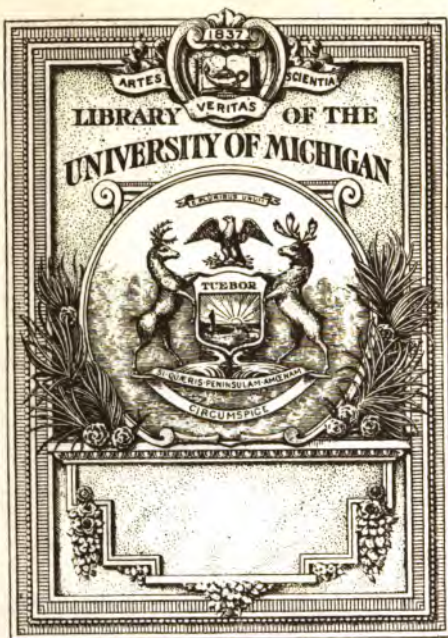
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THE GIFT OF  
Mr. Sidney C. Eastman

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1833



*Cooper, James Fenimore*

# THE HEADSMAN;

OR,

THE ABBAYE DES VIGNERONS.

A TALE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BRAVO," &c. &c.

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"How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds  
Makes deeds ill done!"

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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1833.

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# THE HEADSMAN.

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## CHAPTER I.

———But I have not the time to pause  
Upon these gewgaws of the heart.

WERNER.

THOUGH the word castle is of common use in Europe, as applied to ancient baronial edifices, the thing itself is very different in style, extent, and cost, in different countries. Security, united to dignity and the means of accommodating a train of followers suited to the means of the noble, being the common object, the position and defences of the place

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necessarily varied according to the general aspect of the region in which it stood. Thus ditches and other broad expanses of water were much depended on in all low countries, as in Flanders, Holland, parts of Germany, and much of France; while hills, spurs of mountains, and more especially the summits of conical rocks, were sought in Switzerland, Italy, and wherever else these natural means of protection could readily be found. Other circumstances, such as climate, wealth, the habits of a people, and the nature of the feudal rights, also served greatly to modify the appearance and extent of the building. The ancient hold in Switzerland was originally little more than a square solid tower, perched upon a rock, with turrets at its angles. Proof against fire from without, it had ladders to mount from floor to floor, and often contained its beds in the deep recesses of the windows, or in alcoves wrought in the massive wall. As greater security or greater means enabled, offices and construc-

tions of more importance arose around its base, enclosing a court. These necessarily followed the formation of the rock, until, in time, the confused and inartificial piles, which are now seen mouldering on so many of the minor spurs of the Alps, were created.

As is usual in all ancient holds, the Rittersaal—the Salle des Chevaliers—or the knights' hall, of Blonay, as it is differently called in different languages, was both the largest and the most laboriously decorated apartment of the edifice. It was no longer in the rude gaol-like keep that grew, as it were, from the living rock, on which it had been reared with so much skill as to render it difficult to ascertain where nature ceased and art commenced; but it had been transferred, a century before the occurrences related in our tale, to a more modern portion of the buildings that formed the south-eastern angle of the whole construction. The room was spacious, square, simple, for such is the fashion of the country, and lighted by windows

that looked on one side towards Valais, and on the other over the whole of the irregular, but lovely, declivity, to the margin of the Lemman, and along that beautiful sheet, embracing hamlet, village, city, castle, and purple mountain, until the view was limited by the hazy Jura. The window on the latter side of the knights' hall, had an iron balcony at a giddy height from the ground, and in this airy look-out Adelheid had taken her seat, when, after quitting her father, she mounted to the apartment common to all the guests of the castle.

We have already alluded generally to the personal appearance and to the moral qualities of the Baron de Willading's daughter, but we now conceive it necessary to make the reader more intimately acquainted with one who is destined to act no mean part in the incidents of our tale. It has been said that she was pleasing to the eye, but her beauty was of a kind that depended more on expression, on a union of character with feminine grace,

than on the vulgar lines of regularity and symmetry. While she had no feature that was defective, she had none that was absolutely faultless, though all were combined with so much harmony, and the soft expression of the mild blue eye accorded so well with the gentle play of a sweet mouth, that the soul of their owner seemed ready at all times to appear through these ingenuous tell-tales of her thoughts. Still, maidenly reserve sate in constant watch over all, and it was when the spectator thought himself most in communion with her spirit, that he most felt its pure and correcting influence. Perhaps a cast of high intelligence, of a natural power to discriminate, which much surpassed the limited means accorded to females of that age, contributed their share to hold those near her in respect, and served in some degree as a mild and wise repellent, to counteract the attractions of her gentleness and candour. In short, one cast unexpectedly in her society would not have been slow to infer, and

he would have decided correctly, that Adelheid de Willading was a girl of warm and tender affections, of a playful but regulated fancy, of a firm and lofty sense of all her duties, whether natural or merely the result of social obligations, of melting pity, and yet of a habit and quality to think and act for herself, in all those cases in which it was fitting for a maiden of her condition and years to assume such self-control.

It was now more than a year since Adelheid had become fully sensible of the force of her attachment for Sigismund Steinbach, and during all that time she had struggled hard to overcome a feeling which she believed could lead to no happy result. The declaration of the young man himself, a declaration that was extorted involuntarily and in a moment of powerful passion, was accompanied by an admission of its uselessness and folly, and it first opened her eyes to the state of her own feelings. Though she had listened,

as all of her sex will listen, even when the passion is hopeless, to such words coming from lips they love, it was with a self-command that enabled her to retain her own secret, and with a settled and pious resolution to do that which she believed to be her duty to herself, to her father, and to Sigismund. From that hour she ceased to see him, unless under circumstances when it would have drawn suspicion on her motives to refuse, and while she never appeared to forget her heavy obligations to the youth, she firmly denied herself the pleasure of even mentioning his name when it could be avoided. But of all ungrateful and reluctant tasks, that of striving to forget is the least likely to succeed. Adelheid was sustained only by her sense of duty and the desire not to disappoint her father's wishes, to which habit and custom had given nearly the force of law with maidens of her condition, though her reason and judgment no less than her affections were both strongly enlisted on the

other side. Indeed, with the single exception of the general unfitness of a union between two of unequal stations, there was nothing to discredit her choice, if that may be termed choice which, after all, was more the result of spontaneous feeling and secret sympathy than of any other cause, unless it were a certain equivocal reserve, and a manifest uneasiness, whenever allusion was made to the early history and to the family of the soldier. This sensitiveness on the part of Sigismund had been observed and commented on by others as well as by herself, and it had been openly ascribed to the mortification of one who had been thrown, by chance, into an intimate association that was much superior to what he was entitled to maintain by birth; a weakness but too common, and which few have strength of mind to resist or sufficient pride to overcome. The intuitive watchfulness of affection, however, led Adelheid to a different conclusion; she saw that

he never affected to conceal, while with equal good taste he abstained from obtrusive allusions to the humble nature of his origin, but she also perceived that there were points of his previous history on which he was acutely sensitive, and which at first she feared must be attributed to the consciousness of acts that his clear perception of moral truth condemned, and which he could wish forgotten. For some time Adelheid clung to this discovery as to a healthful and proper antidote to her own truant inclinations, but native rectitude banished a suspicion which had no sufficient ground, as equally unworthy of them both. The effects of a ceaseless mental struggle, and of the fruitlessness of her efforts to overcome her tenderness in behalf of Sigismund, have been described in the fading of her bloom, in the painful solicitude of a countenance naturally so sweet, and in the settled melancholy of her playful and mellow eye. These were the real causes of



the journey undertaken by her father, and, in truth, of most of the other events which we are about to describe.

The prospect of the future had undergone a sudden change. The colour, though more the effect of excitement than of returning health—for the tide of life, when rudely checked, does not resume its currents at the first breath of happiness—again brightened her cheek and imparted brilliancy to her looks, and smiles stole easily to those lips which had long been growing pallid with anxiety. She leaned forward from the balcony, and never before had the air of her native mountains seemed so balmy and healing. At that moment the subject of her thoughts appeared on the verdant declivity, among the luxuriant nut-trees that shade the natural lawn of Blonay. He saluted her respectfully, and pointed to the glorious panorama of the Leman. The heart of Adelheid beat violently; she struggled for an instant with her fears and her pride, and

then, for the first time in her life, she made a signal that she wished him to join her.

Notwithstanding the important service that the young soldier had rendered to the daughter of the Baron de Willading, and the long intimacy which had been its fruit, so great had been the reserve she had hitherto maintained, by placing a constant restraint on her inclinations, though the simple usages of Switzerland permitted greater familiarity of intercourse than was elsewhere accorded to maidens of rank, that Sigismund at first stood rooted to the ground, for he could not imagine the waving of the hand was meant for him. Adelheid saw his embarrassment, and the signal was repeated. The young man sprang up the acclivity with the rapidity of the wind, and disappeared behind the walls of the castle.

The barrier of reserve, so long and so successfully observed by Adelheid, was now passed, and she felt as if a few short minutes must decide her fate. The necessity of making a

wide circuit in order to enter the court still afforded a little time for reflection, however, and this she endeavoured to improve by collecting her thoughts and recovering her self-possession.

When Sigismund entered the knights' hall, he found the maiden still seated near the open window of the balcony, pale and serious, but perfectly calm, and with such an expression of radiant happiness in her countenance as he had not seen reigning in those sweet lineaments for many painful months. The first feeling was that of pleasure at perceiving how well she bore the alarms and dangers of the past night. This pleasure he expressed, with the frankness admitted by the habits of the Germans.

"Thou wilt not suffer, Adelheid, by the exposure on the lake!" he said, studying her face until the tell-tale blood stole to her very temples.

"Agitation of the mind is a good antidote to the consequences of bodily exposure. So far from suffering by what has passed, I feel

stronger to-day, and better able to endure fatigue, than at any time since we came through the gates of Willading. This balmy air, to me, seems Italy, and I see no necessity to journey farther in search of what they said was necessary to my health, agreeable objects and a generous sun."

"You will not cross the St. Bernard!" he exclaimed in a tone of disappointment.

Adelheid smiled, and he felt encouraged, though the smile was ambiguous. Notwithstanding the really noble sincerity of the maiden's disposition, and her earnest desire to set his heart at ease, nature, or habit, or education, for we scarcely know to which the weakness ought to be ascribed, tempted her to avoid a direct explanation.

"Why need one desire aught that is more lovely or more healing than this?" she answered, evasively. "Here is a warm air; such a scenery as Italy can scarcely surpass, and a friendly roof. The experience of the last

twenty-four hours gives little encouragement for attempting the St. Bernard, notwithstanding the fair promises of hospitality and welcome that have been so liberally held out by the good canon."

"Thy eye contradicts thy tongue, Adelheid; thou art happy and well enough to use pleasantries to-day. For heaven's sake do not neglect to profit by this advantage, however, under a mistaken opinion that Blonay is the well-sheltered Pisa. When the winter shall arrive, thou wilt see that these mountains are still the icy Alps, and the winds will whistle through this crazy castle, as they are wont to sing in the naked corridors of Willading."

"We have time before us, and can think of this. Thou wilt proceed to Milan, no doubt, as soon as the revels of Vévey are ended."

"The soldier has little choice but duty. My long and frequent leaves of absence of late,—leaves that have been liberally granted to me on account of important family-concerns—im-

pose an additional obligation to be punctual, that I may not seem forgetful of favours already enjoyed. Although we all owe a heavy debt to nature, our voluntary engagements have ever seemed to me the most serious."

Adelheid listened with breathless attention. Never before had he uttered the word family, in reference to himself, in her presence. The allusion appeared to have created unpleasant recollections in the mind of the young man himself, for when he ceased to speak his countenance fell, and he even appeared to be fast forgetting the presence of his fair companion. The latter turned sensitively from a subject which she saw gave him pain, and endeavoured to call his thoughts to other things. By an unforeseen fatality, the very expedient adopted hastened the explanation she would now have given so much to postpone.

"My father has often extolled the site of the Baron de Blonay's castle," said Adelheid, gazing from the window, though all the fair

objects of the view floated unheeded before her eyes; "but, until now, I have always suspected that friendly feeling had a great influence on his descriptions."

"You did him injustice then," answered Sigismund, advancing to the opening; "of all the ancient holds of Switzerland, Blonay is perhaps entitled to the palm, for possessing the fairest site. Regard yon treacherous lake, Adelheid! Can we fancy that sleeping mirror the same boiling cauldron on which we were so lately tossed, helpless and nearly hopeless."

"Hopeless, Sigismund, but for thee!"

"Thou forgett'st the daring Italian, without whose coolness and skill we must indeed have irredeemably perished."

"And what would it be to me if the worthless bark were saved, while my father and his friend were abandoned to the frightful fate that befel the patron and that unhappy peasant of Berne!"

The pulses of the young man beat high, for

there was a tenderness in the tones of Adelheid to which he was unaccustomed, and which, indeed, he had never before discovered in her voice.

“ I will go seek this brave mariner,” he said, trembling lest his self-command should be again lost by the seductions of such a communion :—“ it is time he had more substantial proofs of our gratitude.”

“ No, Sigismund,” returned the maiden firmly, and in a way to chain him to the spot, “ thou must not quit me yet.—I have much to say—much that touches my future happiness, and, I am perhaps weak enough to believe, thine.”

Sigismund was bewildered, for the manner of his companion, though the colour went and came in sudden and bright flashes across her pure brows, was miraculously calm and full of dignity. He took the seat to which she silently pointed, and sat motionless as if carved in stone, his faculties absorbed in the single sense of hearing. Adelheid saw that



the crisis was arrived, and that retreat, without an appearance of levity that her character and pride equally forbade, was impossible. The inbred and perhaps the inherent feelings of her sex would now have caused her again to avoid the explanation, at least as coming from herself, but that she was sustained by a high and holy motive.

“Thou must find great delight, Sigismund, in reflecting on thine own good acts to others. But for thee, Melchior de Willading would have long since been childless; and but for thee his daughter would now be an orphan. The knowledge that thou hast had the power and the will to succour thy friends must be worth all other knowledge!”

“As connected with thee, Adelheid, it is,” he answered in a low voice; “I would not exchange the secret happiness of having been of this use to thee, and to those thou lovest, for the throne of the powerful prince I serve. I have had my secret wrested from me already,

and it is vain attempting to deny it, if I would. Thou knowest I love thee ; and, in spite of myself, my heart cherishes the weakness. I rather rejoice, than dread, to say, that it will cherish it until it cease to feel. This is more ~~than~~ I ever intended to repeat to thy modest ears, which ought not to be wounded by idle declarations like these, but — thou smilest — Adelheid !—can thy gentle spirit mock at a hopeless passion !”

“ Why should my smile mean mockery ?”

“ Adelheid !—nay—this never can be. One of my birth — my ignoble, nameless origin, cannot even intimate his wishes, with honour, to a lady of thy name and expectations !”

“ Sigismund it *can* be. Thou hast not well calculated' either the heart of Adelheid de Willading, or the gratitude of her father.”

The young man gazed earnestly at the face of the maiden, which, now that she had disburthened her ~~soul~~ of its most secret thought, reddened to the temples, more however with

excitement than with shame, for she met his ardent look with the mild confidence of innocence and affection. She believed, and she had every reason so to believe, that her words would give pleasure, and, with the jealous watchfulness of true love, she would not willingly let a single expression of happiness escape her. But, instead of the brightening eye, and the sudden expression of joy that she expected, the young man appeared overwhelmed with feelings of a very opposite, and indeed of the most painful, character. His breathing was difficult, his look wandered, and his lips were convulsed. He passed his hand across his brow, like a man in intense agony, and a cold perspiration broke out; as by a dreadful inward working of the spirit, upon his forehead and temples, in large visible drops.

“Adelheid—dearest Adelheid—thou knowest not what thou sayest!—One like me can never become thy husband.”

“Sigismund!—why this distress? Speak to me

—ease thy mind by words. I swear to thee that the consent of my father is accompanied on my part by a willing heart. I love thee, Sigismund—would'st thou have me—can I say more?”

The young man gazed at her incredulously, and then, as thought became more clear, as one regards a much prized object that is hopelessly lost. He shook his head mournfully and buried his face in his hands.

“Say no more, Adelheid—for my sake—for thine own sake, say no more—in mercy be silent! Thou never canst be mine—No, no—honour forbids it; in thee it would be madness, in me dishonour—we can never be united. What fatal weakness has kept me near thee—I have long dreaded this—”

“Dreaded!”

“Nay, do not repeat my words,—for I scarce know what I say. Thou and thy father have yielded, in a moment of vivid gratitude, to a generous, a noble impulse—but it is not for me to profit by the accident that has enabled

me to gain this advantage. What would all of thy blood, all of the republic say, Adelheid, were the noblest born, the best endowed, the fairest, gentlest, best maiden of the canton, to wed a nameless, houseless, soldier of fortune, who has but his sword and some gifts of nature to recommend him? Thy excellent father will surely think better of this, and we will speak of it no more!"

"Were I to listen to the common feelings of my sex, Sigismund, this reluctance to accept what both my father and myself offer might cause me to feign displeasure. But, between thee and me, there shall be nought but holy truth. My father has well weighed all these objections, and he has generously decided to forget them. As for me, placed in the scale against thy merits, they have never weighed at all. If thou canst not become noble in order that we may be equals, I shall find more happiness in descending to thy level, than by living in heartless misery at the vain

height where I have been placed by accident."

"Blessed, ingenuous girl!—But what does it all avail? Our marriage is impossible."

"If thou knowest of any obstacle that would render it improper for a weak, but virtuous, girl—"

"Hold, Adelheid!—do not finish the sentence. I am sufficiently humbled—sufficiently debased—without this cruel suspicion."

"Then why is our union impossible,—when my father not only consents, but wishes it may take place?"

"Give me time for thought—thou shalt know all, Adelheid, sooner or later. Yes, this is, at the least, due to thy noble frankness. Thou shouldst in justice have known it long before."

Adelheid regarded him in speechless apprehension, for the evident and violent physical struggles of the young man too fearfully announced the mental agony he endured. The

colour had fled from her own face, in which the beauty of expression now reigned undisputed mistress; but it was the expression of the mingled sentiments of wonder, dread, tenderness, and alarm. He saw that his own sufferings were fast communicating themselves to his companion, and, by a powerful effort, he so far mastered his emotions as to regain a portion of his self-command.

“ This explanation has been too heedlessly delayed,” he continued; “ cost what it may, it shall be no longer postponed. Thou wilt not accuse me of cruelty, or of dishonest silence, but remember the failing of human nature, and pity rather than blame a weakness which may be the cause of as much future sorrow to thyself, beloved Adelheid, as it is now of bitter regret to me. I have never concealed from thee that my birth is derived from that class which, throughout Europe, is believed to be of inferior rights to thine own; on this head, I am proud rather than humble,

for the invidious distinctions of usage have too often provoked comparisons, and I have been in situations to know that the mere accidents of descent bestow neither personal excellence, superior courage, nor higher intellect. Though human inventions may serve to depress the less fortunate, God has given fixed limits to the means of men. He that would be greater than his kind, and illustrious by unnatural expedients, must debase others to attain his end. By different means than these there is no nobility, and he who is unwilling to admit an inferiority which exists only in idea can never be humbled by an artifice so shallow. On the subject of mere birth, as it is ordinarily estimated, whether it come from pride, or philosophy, or the habit of commanding as a soldier those who might be deemed my superiors as men, I have never been very sensitive. Perhaps the heavier disgrace which crushes me may have caused this want to appear lighter than it otherwise might."



“Disgrace!” repeated Adelheid, in a voice that was nearly choked. “The word is fearful, coming from one of thy regulated mind, and as applied to himself.”

“I cannot choose another. Disgrace it is by the common consent of men—by long and enduring opinion—it would almost seem by the just judgment of God. Dost thou not believe, Adelheid, that there are certain races which are deemed accursed, to answer some great and unseen end—races on whom the holy blessings of Heaven never descend, as they visit the meek and well-deserving that come of other lines!”

“How can I believe this gross injustice, on the part of a Power that is wise without bounds, and forgiving to parental love?”

“Thy answer would be well, were this earth the universe, or this state of being the last. But he whose sight extends beyond the grave, who fashions justice, and mercy, and goodness, on a scale commensurate with

his own attributes, and not according to our limited means, is not to be estimated by the narrow rules that we apply to men. No, we must not measure the ordinances of God by laws that are plausible in our own eyes. Justice is a relative and not an abstract quality; and, until we understand the relations of the Deity to ourselves as well as we understand our own relations to the Deity, we reason in the dark."

"I do not like to hear thee speak thus, Sigismund, and, least of all, with a brow so clouded, and in a voice so hollow!"

"I will tell my tale more cheerfully, dearest. I have no right to make thee the partner of my misery; and yet this is the manner I have reasoned, and thought, and pondered—ay, until my brain has grown heated, and the power to reason itself has nearly tottered. Ever since that accursed hour, in which the truth became known to me, and I was made the master of the fatal secret, have I endeavoured to feel and reason thus."

“What truth? — what secret? — If thou lovest me, Sigismund, speak calmly and without reserve.”

“The young man gazed at her anxious face in a way to show how deeply he felt the weight of the blow he was about to give. Then, after a pause, he continued.

“We have lately passed through a terrible scene together, dearest Adelheid. It was one that may well lessen the distances set between us by human laws and the tyranny of opinions. Had it been the will of God that the bark should perish, what a confused crowd of ill-assorted spirits would have passed together into eternity! We had them, there, of all degrees of vice, as of nearly all degrees of cultivation, from the subtle iniquity of the wily Neapolitan juggler to thine own pure soul. There would have died in the Winkelried the noble of high degree, the reverend priest, the soldier in the pride of his strength, and the mendicant! Death is an uncompromising leveller, and the

depths of the lake, at least, might have washed out all our infamy, whether it came of real demerits or merely from received usage ; even the luckless Balthazar, the persecuted and hated headsman, might have found those who would have mourned his loss."

" If any could have died unwept in meeting such a fate, it must have been one that, in common, awakes so little of human sympathy ; and one too, who, by dealing himself in the woes of others, has less claim to the compassion that we yield to most of our species."

" Spare me—in mercy, Adelheid, spare me—thou speakest of my father !"

## CHAPTER II.

Fortune had smil'd upon Guelberto's birth,  
The heir of Valdespesa's rich domain ;  
An only child, he grew in years and worth,  
And well repaid a father's anxious pain.

SOUTHEY.

As Sigismund uttered this communication, so terrible to the ear of his listener, he arose and fled from the room. The possession of a kingdom would not have tempted him to remain and note its effect. The domestics of Blonay observed his troubled air and rapid strides as he passed them, but, too simple to suspect more than the ordinary impetuosity of youth, he succeeded in getting through the inferior gate of the castle and into the fields,

without attracting any embarrassing attention to his movements. Here he began to breathe more freely, and the load which had nearly choked his respiration became lightened. For half an hour the young man paced the greensward scarcely conscious whither he went, until he found that his steps had again led him beneath the window of the knights' hall. Glancing an eye upward, he saw Adelheid still seated at the balcony, and apparently yet alone. He thought she had been weeping, and he cursed the weakness which had kept him from effecting the often-renewed resolution to remove himself, and his cruel fortunes, for ever from before her mind. A second look, however, showed him that he was again beckoned to ascend ! The revolutions in the purposes of lovers are sudden and easily effected, and Sigismund, through whose mind a dozen ill-digested plans of placing the sea between himself and her he loved had just been floating, was now hurriedly retracing his steps to her presence.

Adelheid had necessarily been educated under the influence of the prejudices of the age and of the country in which she lived. The existence of the office of headsman in Berne, and the nature of its hereditary duties, were well known to her; and, though superior to the inimical feeling which had so lately been exhibited against the luckless Balthazar, she had certainly never anticipated a shock so cruel as was now produced, by abruptly learning that this despised and persecuted being was the father of the youth to whom she had yielded her virgin affections. When the words which proclaimed the connexion had escaped the lips of Sigismund, she listened like one who fancied that her ears deceived her. She had prepared herself to learn that he derived his being from some peasant or ignoble artisan, and, once or twice, as he drew nearer to the fatal declaration, awkward glimmerings of a suspicion that some repulsive moral unworthiness was connected with his origin troubled her imagina-

tion, but her apprehensions could not, by possibility, once turn in the direction of the revolting truth. It was some time before she was able to collect her thoughts, or to reflect on the course it most became her to pursue. But, as has been seen, it was long before she could summon the self-command to request what she now saw was doubly necessary, another meeting with her lover. When he entered, however, she was calm, in exterior at least, and she struggled hard to meet him with a smile. As both had thought of nothing but his last words during the short separation, there appeared no abruptness in the manner in which he resumed the discourse, on seating himself at her side, exactly as if they had not parted at all.

“ The secret has been torn from me, Adelheid. The headsman of the canton is my father; were the fact publicly known, the heartless and obdurate laws would compel me to be his successor. He has no other child,



except a gentle girl—one innocent and kind as thou.”

Adelheid covered her face with both her hands, as if to shut out a view of the horrible truth. Perhaps an instinctive reluctance to permit her companion to discover how great a blow had been given by this avowal of his birth, had also its influence in producing the movement. They who have passed the period of youth, and who can recall those days of inexperience and hope, when the affections are fresh and the heart is untainted with too much communion with the world,—and, especially, they who know of what a delicate compound of the imaginative and the real the master-passion is formed, how sensitively it regards all that can reflect credit on the beloved object, and with what ingenuity it endeavours to find plausible excuses for every blot that may happen, either by accident or demerit, to tarnish the lustre of a picture that fancy has so largely aided in drawing, will understand the rude nature of the shock that

she had received. But Adelheid de Willading, though a woman in the liveliness and fervour of her imagination, as well as in the proneness to conceive her own ingenuous conceptions to be more founded in reality than a sterner view of things might possibly have warranted, was a woman also in the more generous qualities of the heart, and in those enduring principles, which seem to have predisposed the better part of the sex to make the heaviest sacrifices rather than be false to their affections. While her frame shuddered, therefore, with the violence and abruptness of the emotions she had endured, dawnings of the right gleamed upon her pure mind, and it was not long before she was able to contemplate the truth with the steadiness of principle, though it might, at the same time, have been with much of the lingering weakness of humanity. When she lowered her hands, she looked towards the mute and watchful Sigismund, with a smile that caused the deadly paleness of her features to resemble

a gleam of the sun lighting upon a spotless peak of her native mountains.

“It would be vain to endeavour to conceal from thee, Sigismund,” she said, “that I could wish this were not so. I will confess even more—that when the truth first broke upon me, thy repeated services, and, what is even less pardonable, thy tried worth, were for an instant forgotten in the reluctance I felt to admit that my fate could ever be united with one so unhappily situated. There are moments when prejudices and habits are stronger than reason; but their triumph is short in well-intentioned minds. The terrible injustice of our laws have never struck me with such force before, though last night, while those wretched travellers were so eager for the blood of—of—”

“My father, Adelheid.”

“Of the author of thy being, Sigismund,” she continued, with a solemnity that proved to the young man how deeply she revered the tie, “I was compelled to see that society

might be cruelly unjust; but now that I find its laws and prohibitions visiting one like thee, so far from joining in its oppression, my soul revolts against the wrong."

"Thanks — thanks — a thousand thanks!" returned the young man, fervently. "I did not expect less than this from thee, Mademoiselle de Willading."

"If thou didst not expect more—far more, Sigismund," resumed the maiden, her ashen hue brightening to crimson, "thou hast scarcely been less unjust than the world; and I will add, thou hast never understood that Adelheid de Willading, whose name is uttered with so cold a form. We all have moments of weakness; moments when the seductions of life, the worthless ties which bind together the thoughtless and selfish in what are called the interests of the world, appear of more value than aught else. I am no visionary, to fancy imaginary and factitious obligations superior to those which nature and wisdom have created—

for if there be much unjustifiable cruelty in the practices, there is also much that is wise in the ordinances, of society—or to think that a wayward fancy is to be indulged at any and every expense to the feelings and opinions of others. On the contrary, I well know that so long as men exist in the condition in which they are, it is little more than common prudence to respect their habits; and that ill-assorted unions, in general, contain in themselves a dangerous enemy to happiness. Had I always known thy history, dread of the consequences, or those cold forms which protect the fortunate, would probably have interposed to prevent either from learning much of the other's character.—I say not this, Sigismund, as by thy eye I see thou wouldst think, in reproach for any deception, for I well know the accidental nature of our acquaintance, and that the intimacy was forced upon thee by our own importunate gratitude, but simply, and in explanation of my own feelings. As it is, we are not to judge of our

situation by ordinary rules, and I am not now to decide on your pretensions to my hand, merely as the daughter of the Baron de Willading receiving a proposal from one whose birth is not noble, but as Adelheid should weigh the claims of Sigismund, subject to some diminution of advantages, if thou wilt, that is perhaps greater than she had at first anticipated."

"Dost thou consider the acceptance of my hand possible, after what thou knowest!" exclaimed the young man, in open wonder.

"So far from regarding the question in that manner, I ask myself if it will be right—if it be possible, to reject the preserver of my own life, the preserver of my father's life, Sigismund Steinbach, because he is the son of one that men persecute?"

"Adelheid!"

"Do not anticipate my words," said the maiden calmly, but in a way to check his impatience by the quiet dignity of her manner.

"This is an important, I might say a solemn

decision, and it has been presented to me suddenly and without preparation. Thou wilt not think the worse of me, for asking time to reflect before I give the pledge that, in my eyes, will be for ever sacred. My father, believing thee to be of obscure origin, and thoroughly conscious of thy worth, dear Sigismund, authorised me to speak as I did in the beginning of our interview; but my father may possibly think the conditions of his consent altered by this unhappy exposure of the truth. It is meet that I tell him all, for thou knowest I must abide by his decision. This thine own sense and filial piety will approve."

In spite of the strong objectionable facts that he had just revealed, hope had begun to steal upon the wishes of the young man, as he listened to the consoling words of the single-minded and affectionate Adelheid. It would scarcely have been possible for a youth so endowed by nature, and one so inevitably conscious of his own value, though so modest in its

exhibition, not to feel encouraged by her ingenuous and frank admission, as she betrayed his influence over her happiness in the undisguised and simple manner related. But the intention to appeal to her father caused him to view the subject more dispassionately, for his strong sense was not slow in pointing out the difference between the two judges, in a case like his.

“Trouble him not, Adelheid; the consciousness that his prudence denies what a generous feeling might prompt him to bestow, may render him unhappy. It is impossible that Melchior de Willading should consent to give an only child to a son of the headsmen of his canton. At some other time, when the recollections of the late storm shall be less vivid, thine own reason will approve of his decision.”

His companion, who was thoughtfully leaning her spotless brow on her hand, did not appear to hear his words. She had recovered from



the shock given by the sudden announcement of his origin, and was now musing intently, and with cooler discrimination, on the commencement of their acquaintance, its progress and all its little incidents, down to the two grave events which had so gradually and firmly cemented the sentiments of esteem and admiration in the stronger and indelible tie of affection.

“If thou art the son of him thou namest, why art thou known by the name of Steinbach, when Balthazar bears another?” demanded Adelheid, anxious to seize even the faintest hold of hope.

“It was my intention to conceal nothing, but to lay before thee the history of my life, with all the reasons that may have influenced my conduct,” returned Sigismund; “at some other time, when both are in a calmer state of mind, I shall dare to entreat a hearing ——.”

“Delay is unnecessary—it might even be improper. It is my duty to explain every

thing to my father, and he may wish to know why thou hast not always appeared what thou art. Do not fancy, Sigismund, that I distrust thy motive, but the wariness of the old and the confidence of the young have so little in common!—I would rather that thou told me now.”

He yielded to the mild earnestness of her manner, and to the sweet, but sad, smile with which she seconded the appeal.

“If thou wilt hear the melancholy history, Adelheid,” he said, “there is no sufficient reason why I should wish to postpone the little it will be necessary to say. You are probably familiar with the laws of the canton, I mean those cruel ordinances by which a particular family is condemned, for a better word can scarcely be found, to discharge the duties of this revolting office. This duty may have been a privilege in the dark ages, but it is now become a tax that none, who have been educated with better hopes, can endure to pay. My father

trained from infancy to expect the employment, and accustomed to its discharge in contemplation, succeeded to his parent while yet young; and, though formed by nature a meek and even a compassionate man, he has never shrunk from his bloody tasks, whenever required to fulfil them by the command of his superiors. But, touched by a sentiment of humanity, it was his wish to avert from me what his better reason led him to think the calamity of our race. I am the eldest born, and, strictly, I was the child most liable to be called to assume the office, but, as I have heard, the tender love of my mother induced her to suggest a plan by which I, at least, might be rescued from the odium that had so long been attached to our name. I was secretly conveyed from the house while yet an infant; a feigned death concealed the pious fraud, and thus far, Heaven be praised! the authorities are ignorant of my birth!"

"And thy mother, Sigismund; I have great

respect for that noble mother, who, doubtless is endowed with more than her sex's firmness and constancy, since she must have sworn faith and love to thy father, knowing his duties and the hopelessness of their being evaded? I feel a reverence for a woman so superior to the weaknesses, and yet so true to the real and best affections, of her sex!"

The young man smiled so painfully as to cause his enthusiastic companion to regret that she had put the question.

"My mother is certainly a woman not only to be loved, but in many particulars deeply to be revered. My poor and noble mother has a thousand excellencies, being a most tender parent, with a heart so kind that it would grieve her to see injury done even to the meanest living thing. She was not a woman, surely, intended by God to be the mother of a line of executioners!"

"Thou seest, Sigismund," said Adelheid, nearly breathless in the desire to seek an

excuse for her own predilections, and to lessen the mental agony he endured — “thou seest that one gentle and excellent woman, at least, could trust her happiness to thy family. No doubt she was the daughter of some worthy and just-viewing burgher of the canton, that had educated his child to distinguish between misfortune and crime?”

“She was an only child and an heiress, like thyself, Adelheid;” he answered, looking about him as if he sought some object on which he might cast part of the bitterness that loaded his heart. “Thou art not less the beloved and cherished of thine own parent than was my excellent mother of her’s!”

“Sigismund, thy manner is startling!— What wouldst thou say?”

“Neufchâtel, and other countries besides Berne, have their privileged! My mother was the only child of the headsman of the first. Thus thou seest, Adelheid, that I boast my quarterings as well as another. God be

praised ! we are not legally compelled, however, to butcher the condemned of any country but our own !”

The wild bitterness with which this was uttered, and the energy of his language, struck thrilling chords on every nerve of his listener.

“So many honours should not be unsupported ;” he resumed. “We are rich, for people of humble wishes, and have ample means of living without the revenues of our charge—I love to put forth our long-acquired honours ! The means of a respectable livelihood are far from being wanted. I have told you of the kind intentions of my mother to redeem one of her children, at least, from the stigma which weighed upon us all, and the birth of a second son enabled her to effect this charitable purpose, without attracting attention. I was nursed and educated apart, for many years, in ignorance of my birth. At a suitable age, notwithstanding the early death of my brother, I was sent to seek advancement in the service

of the house of Austria, under the feigned name I bear. I will not tell thee the anguish I felt, Adelheid, when the truth was at length revealed ! Of all the cruelties inflicted by society, there is none so unrighteous in its nature as the stigma it entails in the succession of crime or misfortune : of all its favours, none can find so little justification, in right and reason, as the privileges accorded to the accident of descent."

"And yet we are much accustomed to honour those that come of an ancient line, and to see some part of the glory of the ancestor even in the most remote descendant."

"The more remote, the greater is the world's deference. What better proof can we have of the world's weakness? Thus the immediate child of the hero, he whose blood is certain, who bears the image of the father in his face, who has listened to his counsels and may be supposed to have derived, at least, some portion of his greatness from the nearness of his

origin, is less a prince than he who has imbibed the current through a hundred vulgar streams, and, were truth but known, may have no natural claim at all upon the much-prized blood! This comes of artfully leading the mind to prejudices, and of a vicious longing in man to forget his origin and destiny, by wishing to be more than nature ever intended he should become."

"Surely, Sigismund, there is something justifiable in the sentiment of desiring to belong to the good and noble!"

"If good and noble were the same. Thou hast well designated the feeling; so long as it is truly a sentiment, it is not only excusable but wise; for who would not wish to come of the brave, and honest, and learned, or by what other greatness they may be known?—it is wise, since the legacy of his virtues is perhaps the dearest incentive that a good man has for struggling against the currents of baser interest; but what hope is left to one like me,



who finds himself so placed that he can neither inherit nor transmit aught but disgrace! I do not affect to despise the advantages of birth, simply because I do not possess them; I only complain that artful combinations have perverted what should be sentiment and taste into a narrow and vulgar prejudice, by which the really ignoble enjoy privileges greater than those perhaps who are worthy of the highest honours man can bestow."

Adelheid had encouraged the digression, which, with one less gifted with strong good sense than Sigismund might have only served to wound his pride, but she perceived that he eased his mind by thus drawing on his reason, and by setting up that which should be in opposition to that which was.

"Thou knowest," she answered, "that neither my father nor I am disposed to lay much stress on the opinions of the world, as it concerns thee."

"That is, neither will insist on nobility; but

will either consent to share the obloquy of a union with an hereditary executioner?"

"Thou hast not yet related all it may be necessary to know that we may decide."

"There is left little to explain. The expedient of my kind parents has thus far succeeded. Their two surviving children, my sister and myself, were snatched, for a time at least, from their accursed fortune, while my poor brother, who promised little, was left, by a partiality I will not stop to examine, to pass as the inheritor of our infernal privileges—Nay, pardon, dearest Adelheid, I will be more cool; but death has saved the youth from the execrable duties, and I am now the only male child of Balthazar—yes," he added, laughing frightfully, "I, too, have now a narrow monopoly of all the honours of our house!"

"Thou—thou, Sigismund—with thy habits, thy education, thy feelings, thou surely canst not be required to discharge the duties of this horrible office!"

“It is easy to see that my high privileges do not charm you, Mademoiselle de Willading; nor can I wonder at the taste. My chief surprise should be, that you so long tolerate an executioner in your presence.”

“Did I not know and understand the bitterness of feeling natural to one so placed, this language would cruelly hurt me, Sigismund; but thou canst not truly mean there is a real danger of thy ever being called to execute this duty? Should there be the chance of such a calamity, may not the influence of my father avert it? He is not without weight in the councils of the canton.”

“At present his friendship need not be taxed, for none but my parents, my sister, and thou, Adelheid, are acquainted with the facts I have just related. My poor sister is an artless, but an unhappy girl, for the well-intentioned design of our mother has greatly disqualified her from bearing the truth, as she might

have done, had it been kept constantly before her eyes. To the world, a young kinsman of my father appears destined to succeed him, and there the matter must stand until fortune shall decide differently. As respects my poor sister, there is some little hope that the evil may be altogether averted. She is on the point of a marriage here at Vévey, that may be the means of concealing her origin in new ties. As for me, time must decide my fate."

"Why should the truth be ever known!" exclaimed Adelheid, nearly gasping for breath, in her eagerness to propose some expedient that should rescue Sigismund for ever from so odious an office. "Thou sayest that there are ample means in thy family—relinquish all to this youth, on condition that he assume thy place!"

"I would gladly beggar myself to be quit of it—"

"Nay, thou wilt not be a beggar while there

is wealth among the de Willadings. Let the final decision, in respect to other things, be what it may, this can we at least promise !”

“ My sword will prevent me from being under the necessity of accepting the boon thou would’st offer. With this good sword I can always command an honourable existence, should Providence save me from the disgrace of exchanging it for that of the executioner. But there exists an obstacle of which thou hast not yet heard. My sister, who has certainly no admiration for the honours that have humiliated our race for so many generations—I might say ages—have we not ancient honours, Adelheid, as well as thou ?—my sister is contracted to one who bargains for eternal secrecy on this point, as the condition of his accepting the hand and ample dowry of one of the gentlest of human beings ! Thou seest that others are not as generous as thyself, Adelheid ! My father, anxious to dispose of his child, has consented to the terms,

and as the youth who is next in succession to the family-honours is little disposed to accept them, and has already some suspicion of the deception as respects her, I may be compelled to appear in order to protect the offspring of my unoffending sister from the curse."

This was assailing Adelheid in a point where she was the weakest. One of her generous temperament and self-denying habits could scarce entertain the wish of exacting that from another which she was not willing to undergo herself, and the hope that had just been reviving in her heart was nearly extinguished by the discovery. Still she was so much in the habit of feeling under the guidance of her excellent sense, and it was so natural to cling to her just wishes, while there was a reasonable chance of their being accomplished, that she did not despair.

"Thy sister and her future husband know her birth, and understand the chances they run."

“She knows all this, and such is her generosity, that she is not disposed to betray me in order to serve herself. But this self-denial forms an additional obligation on my part to declare myself the wretch I am. I cannot say that my sister is accustomed to regard our long-endured fortunes with all the horror I feel, for she has been longer acquainted with the facts, and the domestic habits of her sex have left her less exposed to the encounter of the world’s hatred, and perhaps she is partly ignorant of all the odium we sustain. My long absences in foreign services delayed the confidence as respects myself, while the yearnings of a mother towards an only daughter caused her to be received into the family, though still in secret, several years before I was told the truth. She is also much my junior, and all these causes, with some difference in our education, has less disposed her to misery than I am; for while my father, with a cruel kindness, had me well and even liberally instructed, Christine was

taught as better became the hopes and origin of both. Now tell me, Adelheid, that thou hatest me for my parentage, and despisest me for having so long dared to intrude on thy company, with the full consciousness of what I am for ever present to my thoughts !”

“ I like not to hear thee make these bitter allusions to an accident of this nature, Sigismund. Were I to tell thee that I do not feel this circumstance with nearly, if not quite, as much poignancy as thyself,” added the ingenuous girl, with a noble frankness, “ I should do injustice to my gratitude and to my esteem for thy character. But there is more elasticity in the heart of woman than in that of thy imperious and proud sex. So far from thinking of thee as thou wouldst fain believe, I see nought but what is natural and justifiable in thy reserve. Remember, thou hast not tempted my ears by professions and prayers, as women are commonly entreated, but that the interest I feel in thee has been modestly and fairly



won. I can neither say nor hear more at present, for this unexpected announcement has in some degree unsettled my mind. Leave me to reflect on what I ought to do, and rest assured that thou canst not have a kinder or more partial advocate of what truly belongs to thy honour and happiness than my own heart."

As the daughter of Melchior de Willading concluded, she extended her hand with affection to the young man, who pressed it against his breast, with manly tenderness, when he slowly and reluctantly withdrew.

*Cap. his mai- I understand a subtil  
de lui le jugement pour  
S'agissant d'un refusat,  
nulle que lui est le digne  
à rance*

## CHAPTER III.

To know no more  
Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her praise.

MILTON.

OUR heroine was a woman in the best meaning of that endearing, and, we might add, comprehensive word. Sensitive, reserved, and at times even timid, on points that did not call for the exercise of higher qualities, she was firm in her principles, constant as she was fond in her affections, and self-devoted when duty and inclination united to induce the concession, to a degree that placed the idea of sacrifice out of the question. On the other hand, the liability to receive lively impressions, a distinctive

feature of her sex, and the aptitude to attach importance to the usages by which she was surrounded, and which is necessarily greatest in those who lead secluded and inactive lives, rendered it additionally difficult for her mind to escape from the trammels of opinion, and to think with indifference of circumstances which all near her treated with high respect, or to which they attached a stigma allied to disgust. Had the case been reversed, had Sigismund been noble, and Adelheid a headsmen's child, it is probable the young man might have found the means to indulge his passion without making too great a sacrifice of his pride. By transporting his wife to his castle, conferring his own established name, separating her from all that was unpleasant and degrading in the connexion, and finding occupation for his own mind in the multiplied and engrossing employments of his station, he would have had diminished motives for contemplating, and consequently for lamenting,

the objectionable features of the alliance he had made. These are the advantages which nature and the laws of society give to man over the weaker but the truer sex : and yet how few would have had sufficient generosity to make even the sacrifice of feeling which such a course required ! On the other hand, Adelheid would be compelled to part with the ancient and distinguished appellation of her family, to adopt one which was deemed infamous in the canton, or, if some politic expedient were found to avert this first disgrace, it would unavoidably be of a nature to attract, rather than to avert, the attention of all who knew the facts, from the humiliating character of his origin. She had no habitual relief against the constant action of her thoughts, for the sphere of woman narrows the affections in such a way as to render them most dependent on the little accidents of domestic life ; she could not close her doors against communication with the kinsmen of her husband, should it be his pleasure to command

or his feeling to desire it, and it would become obligatory on her to listen to the still but never-ceasing voice of duty, and to forget, at his request, that she had ever been more fortunate, or that she was born for better hopes.

We do not say that all these calculations crossed the mind of the musing maiden, though she certainly had a general and vague view of the consequences that were likely to be drawn upon herself by a connexion with Sigismund. She sat motionless, buried in deep thought, long after his disappearance. The young man had passed by the postern around the base of the castle, and was descending the mountain-side, across the sloping meadows, with rapid steps, and probably for the first time since their acquaintance her eye followed his manly figure vacantly and with indifference.

Her mind was too intently occupied for the usual observation of the senses. The whole of that grand and lovely landscape was spread before her without conveying impressions, as

we gaze into the void of the firmament with our looks on vacuum. Sigismund had disappeared among the walls of the vineyards, when she arose, and drew such a sigh as is apt to escape us after long and painful meditation. But the eyes of the high-minded girl were bright and her cheek flushed, while the whole of her features wore an expression of loftier beauty than ordinarily distinguished even her loveliness. Her own resolution was formed. She had decided with the rare and generous self-devotion of a female heart that loves, and which can love in its freshness and purity but once. At that instant footsteps were heard in the corridor, and the three old nobles whom we so lately left on the castle-terrace, appeared together in the knights' hall.

Melchior de Willading approached his daughter with a joyous face, for he too had lately gained what he conceived to be a glorious conquest over his prejudices, and the victory put him in excellent humour with himself.

“The question is for ever decided ;” he said, kissing the burning forehead of Adelheid with affection, and rubbing his hands, in the manner of one who was glad to be free from a perplexing doubt. “These good friends agree with me, that, in a case like this, it becomes even our birth to forget the origin of the youth. He who has saved the lives of the two last of the Willadings at least deserves to have some share in what is left of them. Here is my good Grimaldi, too, ready to beard me if I will not consent to let him enrich the brave fellow—as if we were beggars, and had not the means of supporting our kinsman in credit at home ! But we will not be indebted even to so tried a friend for a tittle of our happiness. The work shall be all our own, even to the letters of nobility, which I shall command at an early day from Vienna ; for it would be cruel to let the noble fellow want so simple an advantage, which will at once raise him to our own level, and make him as good,—ay, by the beard of Luther ! better than the best man in Berne.”

“ I have never known thee niggardly before, though I have known thee often well entrenched behind Swiss frugality ;” said the Signor Grimaldi, laughing. “ Thy life, my dear Melchior, may have excellent value in thine own eyes, but I am little disposed to set so mean a price on my own, as thou appearest to think it should command. Thou hast decided well, I will say nobly, in the best meaning of the word, in consenting to receive this brave Sigismund as a son ; but thou art not to think, young lady, because this body of mine is getting the worse for use, that I hold it altogether worthless, and that it is to be dragged from yonder lake like so much foul linen, and no questions are to be asked touching the manner in which the service has been done. I claim to portion thy husband, that he may at least make an appearance that becomes the son-in-law of Melchior de Willading. Am I of no value, that ye treat me so unceremoniously as to say I shall not pay for my own preservation ?”



“Have it thine own way, good Gaetano, have it as thou wilt, so thou dost but leave us the youth—”

“Father—”

“I will have no maidenly affectation, Adelheid. I expect thee to receive the husband we offer with as good a grace as if he wore a crown. It has been agreed upon between us that Sigismund Steinbach is to be my son, and, from time immemorial, the daughters of our house have submitted, in these affairs, to what has been advised by the wisdom of their seniors, as became their sex and inexperience.”

The three old men had entered the hall full of good-humour, and it would have been sufficiently apparent, by the manner of the Baron de Willading, that he trifled with Adelheid, had it not been well known to the others that her feelings were chiefly consulted in the choice that had just been made.

But, notwithstanding the high glee in which the father spoke, the pleasure and buoyancy

of his manner did not communicate itself to the child as quickly as he could wish. There was far more than virgin embarrassment in the mien of Adelheid. Her colour went and came, and her look turned from one to the other painfully, while she struggled to speak. The Signor Grimaldi whispered to his companions, and Roger de Blonay discreetly withdrew, under the pretence that his services were needed at Vévey, where active preparations were making for the Abbaye des Vignerons. The Genoese would then have followed his example, but the baron held his arm, while he turned an enquiring eye towards his daughter, as if commanding her to deal more frankly with him.

“Father,” said Adelheid, in a voice that shook, in spite of the effort to control her feelings, “I have something important to communicate, before this acceptance of Herr Steinbach is a matter irrevocably determined.”

“Speak freely, my child; this is a tried

friend, and one entitled to know all that concerns us, especially in this affair. Throwing aside all pleasantries, I trust, Adelheid, that we are to have no girlish trifling with a youth like Sigismund; to whom we owe so much, even to our lives, and in whose behalf we should be ready to sacrifice every feeling of prejudice, or habit—all that we possess, ay, even to our pride.”

“ All, father ? ”

“ I have said all. I will not take back a letter of the word, though it should rob me of Willading, my rank in the canton, and an ancient name to boot. Am I not right, Gaetano ? I place the happiness of the boy above all other considerations, that of Adelheid being understood to be so intimately blended with his. I repeat it, therefore, all.”

“ It would be well to hear what the young lady has to say before we urge this affair any farther ; ” said the Signor Grimaldi, who, having achieved no conquest over himself, was not quite so exuberant in his exultation as his

friend ; observing more calmly, and noting what he saw with the clearness of a cooler headed and more sagacious man. “ I am much in error, or thy daughter has that which is serious, to communicate.”

The paternal affection of Melchior now took the alarm, and he gave an eager attention to his child. Adelheid returned his evident solicitude by a smile of love, but its painful expression was so unequivocal as to heighten the baron’s fears.

“ Art not well, love ? It cannot be that we have been deceived — that some peasant’s daughter is thought worthy to supplant thee ? Ha ! — Signor Grimaldi, this matter begins, in sooth, to seem offensive ; — but, old as I am — Well we shall never know the truth, unless thou speakest frankly — this is a rare business, after all, Gaetano — that a daughter of mine should be repulsed by a hind ! ”

Adelheid made an imploring gesture for her father to forbear, while she resumed her seat

from farther inability to stand. The two anxious old men followed her example, in wondering silence.

“Thou dost both the honour and modesty of Sigismund great injustice, father ;” resumed the maiden, after a pause, and speaking with a calmness of manner that surprised even herself. “If thou and this excellent and tried friend will give me your attention for a few minutes, nothing shall be concealed.”

Her companions listened in wonder, for they plainly saw that the matter was more grave than either had at first imagined. Adelheid paused again, to summon force for the ungrateful duty, and then she succinctly, but clearly, related the substance of Sigismund’s communication. Both the listeners eagerly caught each syllable that fell from the quivering lips of the maiden, for she trembled, notwithstanding a struggle to be calm that was almost superhuman, and when her voice ceased they gazed at each other like men suddenly

astounded by some dire and totally unexpected calamity. The baron, in truth, could scarcely believe that he had not been deceived by a defective hearing, for age had begun a little to impair that useful faculty, while his friend admitted the words as one receives impressions of the most revolting and disheartening nature.

“This is a damnable and fearful fact!” muttered the latter, when Adelheid had altogether ceased to speak.

“Did she say that Sigismund is the son of Balthazar, the public headsman of the canton!” asked the father of his friend, in the way that one reluctantly assures himself of some half-comprehended and unwelcome truth, —“of Balthazar—of that family accursed!”

“Such is the parentage it hath been the will of God to bestow on the preserver of our lives,” meekly answered Adelheid.

“Hath the villain dared to steal into my family-circle, concealing this disgusting and dis-

graceful fact !—Hath he endeavoured to engraft the impurity of his source on the untarnished stock of a noble and ancient family ! There is something exceeding mere duplicity in this, Signor Grimaldi. There is a dark and meaning crime.”

“ There is that which much exceeds our means of remedying, good Melchior. But let us not rashly blame the boy, whose birth is rather to be imputed to him as a misfortune than as a crime. If he were a thousand Balthazars he has saved all our lives !”

“ Thou sayest true — thou sayest no more than the truth. Thou wert always of a more reasonable brain than I, though thy more southern origin would seem to contradict it. Here, then, are all our fine fancies and liberal schemes of generosity blown to the winds !”

“ That is not so evident,” returned the Genoese, who had not failed the while to study the countenance of Adelheid, as if he would fully ascertain her secret wishes. “ There has

been much discourse, fair Adelheid, between thee and the youth on this matter?"

"Signore, there has. I was about to communicate the intentions of my father; for the circumstances in which we were placed, the weight of our many obligations, the usual distance which rank interposes between the noble and the simply born, perhaps justified this boldness in a maiden," she added, though the tell-tale blood revealed her shame. "I was making Sigismund acquainted with my father's wishes, when he met my confidence by the avowal which I have just related."

"He deems his birth ——?"

"An insuperable barrier to the connexion. Sigismund Steinbach, though so little favoured in the accident of his origin, is not a beggar to sue for that which his own generous feelings would condemn."

"And thou?"

Adelheid lowered her eyes and seemed to reflect on the nature of her answer.



“Thou wilt pardon this curiosity, which may wear too much the aspect of unwarrantable meddling, but my age and ancient friendship, the recent occurrences, and a growing love for all that concerns thee, must plead my excuses. Unless we know thy wishes, daughter, neither Melchior nor I can act as we might wish?”

Adelheid was long and thoughtfully silent. Though every sentiment of her heart, and all that inclination which is the offspring of the warm and poetical illusions of love, tempted her to declare a readiness to sacrifice every other consideration to the engrossing and pure affections of woman, opinion with its iron gripe still held her in suspense on the propriety of braving the prejudices of the world. The timidity of that sex which, however ready to make an offering of its most cherished privileges on the shrine of connubial tenderness, shrinks with a keen sensitiveness from the appearance of a forward devotion to the other,

had its weight also, nor could a child so pious altogether forget the effect her decision might have on the future happiness of her sole surviving parent.

The Genoese understood the struggle, though he foresaw its termination, and he resumed the discourse himself, partly with the kind wish to give the maiden time to reflect maturely before she answered, and partly following a very natural train of his own thoughts.

“There is nought sure in this fickle state of being;” he continued. “Neither the throne, nor riches, nor health, nor even the sacred affections, are secure against change. Well may we pause then and weigh every chance of happiness, ere we take the last and final step in any great or novel measure. Thou knowest the hopes with which I entered life, Melchior, and the chilling disappointments with which my career is likely to close. No youth was born to fairer hopes, nor did Italy know one more

joyous than myself, the morning I received the hand of Angiolina ; and yet two short years saw all those hopes withered, this joyousness gone, and a cloud thrown across my prospects which has never disappeared. A widowed husband and a childless father may not prove a bad counsellor, my friend, in a moment when there is so much doubt besetting thee and thine."

"Thy mind naturally returns to thine own unhappy child, poor Gaetano, when there is so much question of the fortunes of mine."

The Signor Grimaldi turned his look on his friend, but the gleam of anguish, which was wont to pass athwart his countenance when his mind was drawn powerfully towards that painful subject, betrayed that he was not just then able to reply.

"We see in all these events," continued the Genoese, as if too full of his subject to restrain his words, "the unsearchable designs of Providence. Here is a youth who is all that a

father could desire; worthy in every sense to be the depository of a beloved and only daughter's weal; manly, brave, virtuous, and noble in all but the chances of blood, and yet so accursed by the world's opinion that we might scarce venture to name him as the associate of an idle hour, were the fact known that he is the man he has declared himself to be!

"You put the matter in strong language, Signor Grimaldi;" said Adelheid starting.

"A youth of a form so commanding that a king might exult at the prospect of his crown descending on such a head; of a perfection of strength and masculine excellence that will almost justify the dangerous exultation of health and vigour; of a reason that is riper than his years; of a virtue of proof; of all qualities that we respect and which come of study and not of accident, and yet a youth condemned of men to live under the reproach of their hatred and contempt, or to conceal for ever the name of the mother that bore him! Com-

pare this Sigismund with others that may be named; with the high-born and pampered heir of some illustrious house, who riots in men's respect while he shocks men's morals; who presumes on privilege to trifle with the sacred and the just; who lives for self, and that in base enjoyments; who is fitter to be the lunatic's companion than any other's, though destined to rule in the council; who is the type of the wicked, though called to preside over the virtuous; who cannot be esteemed though entitled to be honoured; and let us ask why this is so, what is the wisdom which hath drawn differences so arbitrary, and which, while proclaiming the necessity of justice, so openly, so wantonly, and so ingeniously sets its plainest dictates at defiance?"

"Signore, it should not be thus—God never intended it should be so!"

"While every principle would seem to say that each must stand or fall by his own good or evil deeds, that men are to be honoured as

they merit, every device of human institutions is exerted to achieve the opposite. This is exalted, because his ancestry is noble ; that condemned for no better reason than that he is born vile. Melchior ! Melchior ! our reason is unhinged by subtleties, and our boasted philosophy and right are no more than unblushing mockeries, at which the very devils laugh !”

“ And yet the commandments of God tell us, Gaetano, that the sins of the father shall be visited on the descendants from generation to generation. You of Rome pay not this close attention, perhaps, to sacred writ, but I have heard it said that we have not in Berne a law for which good warranty cannot be found in the holy volume itself.”

“ Ay, there are sophists to prove all that they wish. The crimes and follies of the ancestor leave their physical, or even their moral taint, on the child, beyond a question, good Melchior ;—but is not this sufficient ? Are we

blasphemously, even impiously, to pretend that God has not sufficiently provided for the punishment of the breaches of his wise ordinances, that we must come forward to second them by arbitrary and heartless rules of our own? What crime is imputable to the family of this youth beyond that of poverty, which probably drove the first of his race to the execution of their revolting office. There is little in the mien or morals of Sigismund to denote the visitations of Heaven's wise decrees, but there is every thing in his present situation to proclaim the injustice of man."

"And dost thou, Gaetano Grimaldi, the ally of so many ancient and illustrious houses—thou, Gaetano Grimaldi, the honoured of Genoa—dost thou counsel me to give my only child, the heiress of my lands and name, to the son of the public executioner, nay, to the very heritor of his disgusting duties!"

"There thou hast me on the hip, Melchior; the question is put strongly, and needs re-

flection for an answer. Oh ! why is this Balthazar so rich in offspring, and I so poor ! But we will not press the matter ; it is an affair of many sides, and should be judged by us as men, as well as nobles. Daughter, thou hast just learned, by the words of thy father, that I am against thee, by position and heritage, for, while I condemn the principle of this wrong, I cannot overlook its effects, and never before did a case of as tangled difficulty, one in which right was so palpably opposed by opinion, present itself for my judgment. Leave us, that we may command ourselves ; the required decision exacts much care, and greater mastery of ourselves than I can exercise, with that sweet pale face of thine appealing so eloquently to my heart in behalf of the noble boy."

Adelheid arose, and first offering her marble-like brow to the salutations of both her parents, for the ancient friendship and strong sympathies of the Genoese gave him a claim



to this appellation in her affections at least, she silently withdrew. As to the conversation which ensued between the old nobles, we momentarily drop the curtain, to proceed to other incidents of our narrative. It may, however, be generally observed that the day passed quietly away without the occurrence of any event which it is necessary to relate, all in the château, with the exception of the travellers, being principally occupied by the approaching festivities. The Signor Grimaldi sought an occasion to have a long and confidential communication with Sigismund, who, on his part, carefully avoided being seen again by her who had so great an influence on his feelings, until both had time to recover their self-command.

## CHAPTER IV.

Hold, hurt him not, for God's sake ;—he is mad.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

THE festivals of Bacchus are supposed to have been the models of those long continued festivities, which are still known in Switzerland by the name of the Abbaye des Vignerons.

This fête was originally of a simple and rustic character, being far from possessing the laboured ceremonies and classical allegories of a later day, the severity of monkish discipline most probably prohibiting the introduction of allusions to the Heathen mythology, as was afterwards practised, for certain religious communities that were the proprietors of large vine-

yards in that vicinity appear to have been the first known patrons of the custom. So long as a severe simplicity reigned in the festivities they were annually observed, but, when heavier expenses and greater preparations became necessary, longer intervals succeeded; the Abbaye, at first, causing its festival to become triennial, and subsequently extending the period of vacation to six years. As greater time was obtained for the collection of means and inclination, the festival gained in *éclat*, until it came at length to be a species of jubilee, to which the idle, the curious, and the observant of all the adjacent territories were accustomed to resort in crowds. The town of Vévey profited by the circumstance, the usual motive of interest being enlisted in behalf of the usage, and, down to the epoch of the great European revolution, there would seem to have been an unbroken succession of the fêtes. The occasion to which there has so often been allusion, was one of the regular and long

expected festivals ; and, as report had spoken largely of the preparations, the attendance was even more numerous than usual.

Early on the morning of the second day after the arrival of our travellers at the neighbouring castle of Blonay, a body of men, dressed in the guise of halberdiers, a species of troops then known in most of the courts of Europe, marched into the great square of Vévey, taking possession of all its centre, and posting its sentries in such a manner as to interdict the usual passages of the place. This was the preliminary step in the coming festivities ; for this was the spot chosen for the scene of most of the ceremonies of the day. The curious were not long behind the guards, and by the time the sun had fairly arisen above the hills of Fribourg, some thousands of spectators were pressing in and about the avenues of the square, and boats from the opposite shores of Savoy were arriving at each instant, crowded to the water's edge with peasants and their families.

Near the upper end of the square, capacious scaffoldings had been erected to contain those who were privileged by rank, or those who were able to buy honours with the vulgar medium ; while humbler preparations for the less fortunate completed the three sides of a space that was in the form of a parallelogram, and which was intended to receive the actors in the coming scene. The side next the water was unoccupied, though a forest of latine spars, and a platform of decks more than supplied the deficiency of scaffolding and room. Music was heard, from time to time, intermingled or relieved by those wild Alpine cries which characterize the songs of the mountaineers. The authorities of the town were early a-foot, and, as is customary with the important agents of small concerns, they were exercising their municipal functions with a bustle, which of itself contained reasonable evidence that they were of no great moment, and a gravity of mien with which the chiefs of a state might have believed it possible to dispense.

The estrade, or stage, erected for the superior class of spectators was decorated with flags, and a portion near its centre had a fair display of tapestry and silken hangings. The chateau-looking edifice near the bottom of the square, and whose windows, according to a common Swiss and German usage, showed the intermingled stripes that denoted it to be public property, were also gay in colours, for the ensign of the Republic floated over its pointed roofs, and rich silks waved against the walls. This was the official residence of Peter Hofmeister, the functionary whom we have already introduced to the reader.

An hour later, a shot gave the signal for the various *troupes* to appear, and soon after, parties of the different actors arrived in the square. As the little processions approached to the sound of the trumpet or horn, curiosity became more active, and the populace was permitted to circulate in those portions of the square that were not immediately required for other purposes. About this time a solitary

individual appeared on the stage. He seemed to enjoy peculiar privileges, not only from his situation, but by the loud salutations and noisy welcomes with which he was greeted from the crowd below. It was the good monk of St. Bernard who, with a bare head and a joyous contented face, answered to the several calls of the peasants, most of whom had either bestowed hospitality on the worthy Augustine, in his many journeyings among the charitable of the lower world, or had received it at his hands in their frequent passages of the mountain. These recognitions and greetings spoke well for humanity; for in every instance they wore the air of cordial good-will, and a readiness to do honour to the benevolent character of the religious community that was represented in the person of its clavier or steward.

“ Good luck to thee, Father Xavier, and a rich *quête*,” cried a burly peasant; “ thou hast of late unkindly forgotten Benoit Emery and his. When did a clavier of St. Bernard

ever knock at my door, and go away with an empty hand? We look for thee, reverend monk, with thy vessel, to-morrow; for the summer has been hot, the grapes are rich, and the wine is beginning to run freely in our tubs. Thou shalt dip without any to look at thee, and, take it of which colour thou wilt, thou shalt take it with a welcome."

"Thanks, thanks, generous Benoit; St. Augustine will remember the favour, and thy fruitful vines will be none the poorer for thy generosity. We ask only that we may give, and on none do we bestow more willingly than on the honest Vaudois, whom may the saints keep in mind for their kindness and good-will!"

"Nay, I will have none of thy saints; thou knowest we are St. Calvin's men in Vaud, if there must be any canonized. But what is it to us that thou hearest mass while we love the simple worship! Are we not equally men? Does not the frost nip the members of Catholic and Protestant the same? or does the avalanche



respect one more than the other? I never knew thee, or any of thy convent, question the frozen traveller of his faith, but all are fed, and warmed, and, at need, administered to from the pharmacy, with brotherly care, and as Christians merit. Whatever thou mayest think of the state of our souls, thou on thy mountain there, no one will deny thy tender services to our bodies. Say I well, neighbours, or is this only the foolish gossip of old Benoit, who has crossed the Col so often, that he has forgotten that our churches have quarrelled, and that the learned will have us go to heaven by different roads?"

A general movement among the people, and a tossing of hands appeared in support of the truth and popularity of the honest peasant's sentiments, for in that age the hospice of St. Bernard, more exclusively a refuge for the the real and poor traveller than at present, enjoyed a merited reputation in all the country round.

“Thou shalt always be welcome on the pass, thou and thy friends, and all others in the shape of men, without other interference in thy opinions than secret prayers;” returned the good-humoured and happy-looking clavier, whose round contented face shone partly in habitual joy, partly in gratification at this public testimonial in favour of the brotherhood, and a little in satisfaction perhaps at the promise of an ample addition to the convent’s stores; for the community of St. Bernard, while so much was going out, had a natural and justifiable desire to see some return for its incessant and unwearied liberality. “Thou wilt not deny us the happiness of praying for those we love, though it happen to be in a manner different from that in which they ask blessings for themselves.”

“Have it thine own way, good canon; I am none of those who are ready to refuse a favour because it savours of Rome. But what has become of our friend Uberto? He rarely

comes into the valleys, that we are not anxious to see his glossy coat."

The Augustine gave the customary call, and the mastiff mounted the stage with a grave deliberate step, as if conscious of the dignity and usefulness of the life he led, and like a dog accustomed to the friendly notice of man. The appearance of this well-known and celebrated brute caused another stir in the throng, many pressing upon the guards to get a nearer view, and a few casting fragments of food from their wallets, as tokens of gratitude and regard. In the midst of this little by-play of good feeling, a dark shaggy animal leaped upon the scaffolding, and very coolly commenced, with an activity that denoted the influence of the keen mountain air on his appetite, picking up the different particles of meat that had, as yet, escaped the eye of Uberto. The intruder was received much in the manner that an unpopular or an offending actor is made to

undergo the hostilities of pit and galleries, to revenge some slight or neglect for which he has forgotten, or refused, to atone. In other words, he was incontinently and mercilessly pelted with such missiles as first presented themselves. The unknown animal, which the reader, however, will not be slow in recognising to be the water-dog of Il Maledetto, received these unusual visitations with some surprise, and rather awkwardly ; for, in his proper sphere, Nettano had been quite as much accustomed to meet with demonstrations of friendship from the race he so faithfully served, as any of the far-famed and petted mastiffs of the convent. After dodging sundry stones and clubs, as well as a pretty close attention to the principal matter in hand would allow, and with a dexterity that did equal credit to his coolness and muscle, a missile of formidable weight took the unfortunate follower of Maso in the side, and sent him howling from the stage.

At the next instant, his master was at the throat of the offender, throttling him till he was black in the face.

The unlucky stone had come from Conrad. Forgetful of his assumed character, he had joined in the hue and cry against a dog whose character and service should have been sufficiently known to him, at least, to prove his protection, and had given the cruellest blow of all. It has been already seen that there was little friendship between Maso and the pilgrim, for the former appeared to have an instinctive dislike of the latter's calling, and this little occurrence was not of a character likely to restore the peace between them.

"Thou too!" cried the Italian, whose blood had mounted at the first attack on his faithful follower, and which fairly boiled when he witnessed the cowardly and wanton conduct of this new assailant — "art not satisfied with feigning prayers and godliness with the credulous, but thou must even feign enmity

to my dog, because it is the fashion to praise the cur of St. Bernard at the expense of all other brutes! Reptile!—dost not dread the arm of an honest man, when raised against thee in just anger?"

"Friends—Vévaisans—honourable citizens!" gasped the pilgrim, as the gripe of Maso permitted breath. "I am Conrad, a poor, miserable, repentant pilgrim—Will ye see me murdered for a brute?"

Such a contest could not continue long in such a place. At first the pressure of the curious, and the great density of the crowd, rather favoured the attack of the mariner; but in the end they proved his enemies by preventing the possibility of escaping from those who were especially charged with the care of the public peace. Luckily for Conrad, for passion had fairly blinded Maso to the consequences of his fury, the halberdiers soon forced their way into the centre of the living mass, and they succeeded in seasonably

rescuing him from the deadly gripe of his assailant. Il Maledetto trembled with the reaction of this hot sally, the moment his gripe was forcibly released, and he would have disappeared as soon as possible, had it been the pleasure of those into whose hands he had fallen to permit so politic a step. But now commenced the war of words, and the clamour of voices, which usually succeed, as well as precede, all contests of a popular nature. The officer in charge of this portion of the square questioned; twenty answered in a breath, not only drowning each other's voices, but effectually contradicting all that was said in the way of explanation. One maintained that Conrad had not been content with attacking Maso's dog, but that he had followed up the blow by offering a personal indignity to the master himself; this was the publican in whose house the mariner had taken up his abode, and in which he had been sufficiently liberal in his expenditure fairly to entitle him

to the hospitable support of its landlord. Another professed his readiness to swear that the dog was the property of the pilgrim, being accustomed to carry his wallet, and that Maso, owing to an ancient grudge against both master and beast, had hurled the stone which sent the animal away howling, and had resented a mild remonstrance of its owner in the extraordinary manner that all had seen. This witness was the Neapolitan juggler, Pippo, who had much attached himself to the person of Conrad since the adventure of the bark, and who was both ready and willing to affirm anything in behalf of a friend who had so evident need of his testimony, if it were only on the score of boon-companionship. A third declared that the dog belonged truly to the Italian, that the stone had been really hurled by one who stood near the pilgrim, who had been wrongfully accused of the offence by Maso; that the latter had made his attack under a false impression, and richly merited punishment for the uncereemonious



manner in which he had stopped Conrad's breath. This witness was perfectly honest, but of a vulgar and credulous mind. He attributed the original offence to one near that happened to have a bad name, and who was very liable to father every sin that, by possibility, could be laid at his door as well as some that could not. On the other hand, he had also been duped that morning by the pilgrim's superabundant professions of religious zeal, a circumstance that of itself would have prevented him from detecting Conrad's arm in the air as it cast the stone, and which served greatly to increase his certainty that the first offence came from the luckless wight just alluded to; since they who discriminate under general convictions and popular prejudices, usually heap all the odium they pertinaciously withhold from the lucky and the favoured, on those who seem fated by general consent to be the common target of the world's darts.

The officer, by the time he had deliberately

heard the three principal witnesses, together with the confounding explanations of those who professed to be only half-informed in the matter, was utterly at a loss to decide which had been right and which wrong. He came, therefore, to the safe conclusion to send all the parties to the guard-house, including the witnesses, being quite sure that he had hit on an effectual method of visiting the true criminal with punishment, and of admonishing all those who gave evidence in future to have a care of the manner in which they contradicted each other. Just as this equitable decision was pronounced, the sound of a trumpet proclaimed the approach of a division of the principal mummers, if so irreverent a term can be applied to men engaged in a festival as justly renowned as that of the vine-dressers. This announcement greatly quickened the steps of Justice, for they who were charged with the execution of her decrees felt the necessity of being prompt, under the penalty of losing an interesting por-

tion of the spectacle. Actuated by this new impulse, which, if not as respectable, was quite as strong, as the desire to do right, the disturbers of the peace, even to those who had shown a quarrelsome temper by telling stories that gave each other the lie, were hurried away in a body, and the public was left in the enjoyment of that tranquillity which, in these perilous times of revolution and changes, is thought to be so necessary to its dignity, so especially favourable to commerce, and so grateful to those whose duty it is to preserve the public peace with as little inconvenience to themselves as possible.

A blast of the trumpet was the signal for a more general movement, for it announced the commencement of the ceremonies. As it will be presently necessary to speak of the different personages who were represented on this joyous occasion, we shall only say here, that group after group of the actors came into the square, each party marching to the sound of music from its particular point of rendezvous to the

...

common centre. The stage now began to fill with the privileged, among whom were many of the high aristocracy of the ruling canton, most of its officials, who were too dignified to be more than complacent spectators of revels like these, many nobles of mark from France and Italy, a few travellers from England, for in that age England was deemed a distant country and sent forth but a few of her *élite* to represent her on such occasions, most of those from the adjoining territories who could afford the time and cost, and who by rank or character were entitled to the distinction, and the wives and families of the local officers who happened to be engaged as actors in the representation. By the time the different parts of the principal procession were assembled in the square all the seats of the estrade were crowded, with the exception of those reserved for the bailiff and his immediate friends.


## CHAPTER V.

So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,  
A noble show! While Roscius trod the stage.

COWPER.

THE day was not yet far advanced, when all the component parts of the grand procession had arrived in the square. Shortly after, a flourish of clarions gave notice of the approach of the authorities. First came the bailiff, filled with the dignity of station, and watching, with a vigilant but covert eye, every indication of feeling that might prove of interest to his employers, even while he most affected sympathy with the occasion and self-abandonment to the follies of the hour, for Peter Hofmeister owed his long-established favour with the bürger-

schaft more to a never-slumbering regard to its exclusive interests and its undivided supremacy, than to any particular skill in the art of rendering men comfortable and happy. Next to the worthy bailiff, for apart from an indomitable resolution to maintain the authority of his masters, for good or for evil, the Herr Hofmeister merited the appellation of a worthy man, came Roger de Blonay and his guest the Baron de Willading, marching, *pari passu*, at the side of the representative of Berne himself. There might have been some question how far the bailiff was satisfied with this arrangement of the difficult point of etiquette, for he issued from his own gate with a sort of sidelong movement that kept him nearly confronted to the Signor Grimaldi, though it left him the means of choosing his path and of observing the aspect of things in the crowd. At any rate, the Genoese, though apparently occupying a secondary station, had no grounds to complain of indifference to his presence. Most of the observances and



not a few of the sallies of honest Peter, who had some local reputation as a joker and a *bel esprit*, as is apt to be the case with your municipal magistrate, more especially when he holds his authority independently of the community with whom he associates, and perhaps as little likely to be the fact when he depends on popular favour for his rank, were addressed to the Signor Grimaldi. Most of these good things were returned in kind, the Genoese meeting the courtesies like a man accustomed to be the object of peculiar attentions, and possibly like one who rather rioted in the impunity from ceremonies and public observation, that he now happened to enjoy. Adelheid, with a maiden of the house of Blonay, closed the little train.

As all commendable diligence was used by the officers of the peace to make way for the bailiff, Herr Hofmeister and his companions were soon in their allotted stations, which, it is

scarcely necessary to repeat, were the upper places on the estrade. Peter had seated himself, after returning numerous salutations, for none in a situation to catch his eye neglected so fair an opportunity to show their intimacy with the bailiff, when his wandering glance fell upon the happy visage of Father Xavier. Rising hastily, the bailiff went through a multitude of the formal ceremonies that distinguished the courtesy of the place and period, such as frequent wavings and liftings of the beaver, profound reverences, smiles that seemed to flow from the heart, and a variety of other tokens of extraordinary love and respect. When all were ended he resumed his place by the side of Melchior de Willading, with whom he commenced a confidential dialogue.

“We know not, noble Freiherr,” (he spoke in the vernacular of their common canton,) “whether we have most reason to esteem or to disrelish these Augustines. While they



do so many christian acts to the travellers on their mountain yonder, they are devils incarnate in the way of upholding popery and its abominations among the people. Look you, the commonalty—God bless them as they deserve!—have no great skill at doctrinal discussions, and are much disposed to be led away by appearances. Numberless are the miserable dolts who fancy the godliness which is content to pass its time on the top of a frozen hill, doing good, feeding the hungry, dressing the wounds of the fallen, and—but thou knowest the manner in which these sayings run—the ignorant, as I was about to add, are but too ready to believe that the religion which leads men to do this, must have some savour of Heaven in it, after all!”

“Are they so very wrong, friend Peter, that we were wise to disturb the monks in the enjoyment of a favour that is so fairly earned?”

The bailiff looked askance at his brother burgher, for such was the humble appellation

that aristocracy assumed in Berne, appearing desirous to probe the depth of the other's political morals before he spoke more freely.

“ Though of a house so honoured and trusted, I believe thou art not much accustomed of late to mingle with the council ?” he evasively observed.

“ Since the heavy losses in my family, of which thou may'st have heard, the care of this sole surviving child has been my principal solace and occupation. I know not whether the frequent and near sight of death among those so tenderly-loved may have softened my heart towards the Augustines, but to me their's seems a self-denying and a right worthy life.”

“ 'Tis doubtless as you say, noble Melchior, and we shall do well to let our love for the holy canons be seen. Ho ! Mr. Officer—do us the favour to request the reverend monk of St. Bernard to draw nearer, that the people may learn the esteem in which their patient charities and never-wearying benevolence are held by the

lookers-on. As you will have occasion to pass a night beneath the convent's roof, Herr von Willading, in your journey to Italy, a little honour shown to the honest and pains-taking clavier will not be lost on the brotherhood, if these churchmen have even a decent respect for the usages of their fellow-creatures."

Father Xavier took the proffered place, which was nearer to the person of the bailiff than the one he had just quitted and inso-much the more honourable, with the usual thanks, but with a simplicity which proved that he understood the compliment to be due to the fraternity of which he was a member, and not to himself. This little disposition made, as well as all other preliminary matters properly observed, the bailiff seemed satisfied with himself and his arrangements, for the moment.

The reader must imagine the stir in the throng, the importance of the minor agents appointed to marshal the procession, and the mixture of weariness and curiosity that pos-

sessed the spectators, while the several parts of so complicated and numerous a train were getting arranged, each in its prescribed order and station. But, as the ceremonies which followed were of a peculiar character, and have an intimate connexion with the events of the tale, we shall describe them with a little detail, although the task we have allotted to ourselves is less that of sketching pictures of local usages, and of setting before the reader's imagination scenes of real or fancied antiquarian accuracy, than the exposition of a principle, and the wholesome moral which we have always flattered ourselves might, in a greater or less degree, follow from our labours.

A short time previously to the commencement of the ceremonies, a guard of honour, composed of shepherds, gardeners, mowers, reapers, vine-dressers, escorted by halberdiers and headed by music, had left the square in quest of the abbé, as the regular and permanent presiding officer of the abbaye, or company, is

termed. This escort, all the individuals of which were dressed in character, was not long in making its appearance with the officer in question, a warm, substantial citizen and proprietor of the place, who, otherwise attired in the ordinary costume of his class in that age, had decorated his beaver with a waving plume, and, in addition to a staff or baton, wore a flowing scarf pendent from his shoulder. This personage, on whom certain judicial functions had devolved, took a convenient position in the front of the stage, and soon made a sign for the officials to proceed with their duties.

Twelve vine-dressers led by a chief, each having his person more or less ornamented with garlands of vine leaves, and bearing other emblems of his calling, marched in a body chanting a song of the fields. They escorted two of their number who had been pronounced the most skilful and successful in cultivating the vineyards of the adjacent côtes. When they reached the front of the estrade, the abbé pro-

nounced a short discourse in honour of the cultivators of the earth in general, after which he digressed into especial eulogiums on the successful candidates, two pleased, abashed, and unpractised peasants, who received the simple prizes with throbbing hearts. This little ceremony observed, amid the eager and delightful gaze of friends, and the oblique and discontented regards of the few whose feelings were too contracted to open to the joys of others, even on this simple and grateful festival, the trumpets sounded again, and the cry was raised to make room.

A large group advanced from among the body of the actors to an open space, of sufficient size and elevation, immediately in front of the stage. When in full view of the multitude, those who composed it arranged themselves in a prescribed and seemly order. They were the officials of Bacchus. The high-priest, robed in a sacrificial dress, with flowing beard, and head crowned with the vine, stood foremost, chant-

ing in honour of the craft of the vine-dresser. His song also contained a few apposite allusions to the smiling blushing candidates. The whole joined in the chorus, though the leader of the band scarce needed the support of any other lungs than those with which he had been very amply furnished by nature.

The hymn ended, a general burst of instrumental music succeeded, and, the followers of Bacchus regaining their allotted station, the general procession began to move, sweeping around the whole area of the square in a manner to pass in order before the bailiff.

The first body in the march was composed of the council of the abbaye, attended by the shepherds and gardeners. One in an antique costume, and bearing a halberd, acted as marshal. He was succeeded by the two crowned vine-dressers, after whom came the abbé with his counsellors, and large groups of shepherds and shepherdesses, as well as a number of both sexes who toiled in gardens, all attired in cos-

tumes suited to the traditions of their respective pursuits. The marshal and the officers of the abbaye moved slowly past, with the gravity and decorum that became their stations, occasionally halting to give time for the evolutions of those who followed; but the other actors now began in earnest to play their several parts. A group of young shepherdesses, clad in closely fitting vests of sky-blue with skirts of white, each holding her crook, came forward dancing, and singing songs that imitated the bleatings of their flocks and all the other sounds familiar to the elevated pasturages of that region. These were soon joined by an equal number of young shepherds also singing their pastorals, the whole exhibiting an active and merry group of dancers, accustomed to exercise their art on the sward of the Alps; for, in this festival, although we have spoken of the performers as actors, it is not in the literal meaning of the term, since, with few exceptions, none appeared to represent any



other calling than that which, in truth, formed his or her daily occupation. We shall not detain the narrative to say more of this party, than that they formed a less striking exception to the conventional picture of the appearance of those engaged in tending flocks, than the truth ordinarily betrays ; and that their buoyant gaiety, blooming faces, and unwearied action, formed a good introductory preparation for the saltation that was to follow.

The male gardeners appeared in their aprons, carrying spades, rakes, and the other implements of their trade ; the female supporting baskets on their heads filled with rich flowers, vegetables, and fruits. When in front of the bailiff, the young men formed a sort of fascies of their several implements, with a readiness that denoted much study, while the girls arranged their baskets in a circle at its foot. Then, joining hands, the whole whirled around, filling the air with a song peculiar to their pursuits.

During the whole of the preparations of the morning, Adelheid had looked on with a vacant eye, as if her feelings had little connexion with that which was passing before her face. It is scarcely necessary to say, that her mind, in spite of herself, wandered to other scenes, and that her truant thoughts were busy with interests very different from those which were here presented to the senses. But, by the time the group of gardeners had passed dancing away, her feelings began to enlist with those who were so evidently pleased with themselves and all around them, and her father, for the first time that morning, was rewarded for the deep attention with which he watched the play of her features, by an affectionate and natural smile.

“This goes off right merrily, Herr Bailiff;” exclaimed the baron, animated by that encouraging smile, as the blood is quickened by a genial ray of the sun’s heat when it has been long chilled and deadened by cold.—“This goes off with a joyful will, and is likely to end

with credit to thy town ! I only wonder that you have not more of this, and monthly. When joy can be had so cheap, it is churlish to deny it to a people."

" We complain not of the levities, noble Freiherr, for your light thinker makes a sober and dutiful subject ; but we shall have more of this, and of a far better quality, or our time is wasted.—What is thought at Berne, noble Melchior, of the prospects of the Emperor's obtaining a new concession for the levy of troops in our Cantons ?"

" I cry thy mercy, good Peterchen, but by thy leave, we will touch on these matters more at our leisure. Boyish though it seem to thy eyes, so long accustomed to look at matters of state, I do confess that these follies begin to have their entertainment, and may well claim an hour of idleness from him that has nothing better in hand."

Peter Hofmeister ejaculated a little expressively. He then examined the countenance of

the Signor Grimaldi, who had given himself to the merriment with the perfect good-will and self-abandonment of a man of strong intellect, and who felt his powers too sensibly to be jealous of appearances. Shrugging his shoulders, like one that was disappointed, the pragmatical bailiff turned his look towards the revellers, in order to detect, if possible, some breach of the usages of the country, that might require official reproof; for Peter was of that class of governors who have an itching to see their fingers stirring even the air that is breathed by the people, lest they should get it of a quality or in a quantity that might prove dangerous to a monopoly which it is now the fashion to call the conservative principle. In the mean time the revels proceeded.

No sooner had the gardeners quitted the arena, than a solemn and imposing train appeared to occupy the sward. Four females marched to the front, bearing an antique altar that was decorated with suitable devices.

They were clad in emblematical dresses, and wore garlands of flowers on their heads. Boys carrying censers preceded an altar that was dedicated to Flora, and her ministering official came after it, mitred and carrying flowers. Like all the priestesses that followed, she was laboriously attired in the robes that denoted her sacred duty. The goddess herself was borne by four females on a throne canopied by flowers, and from whose several parts sweeping festoons of every hue and die descended to the earth. Haymakers of both sexes, gay and pastoral in their air and attire, succeeded, and a car groaning with the sweet-scented grass of the Alps, accompanied by females bearing rakes, brought up the rear.

The altar and the throne being deposited on the sward, the priestess offered sacrifice, hymning the praise of the goddess with mountain lungs. Then followed the dance of the haymakers, as in the preceding exhibition, and the train went off as before.

“Excellent well, and truer than it could be done by your real pagan!” cried the bailiff, who, in spite of his official longings, began to watch the mummery with a pleased eye. “This beateth greatly our youthful follies in the Genoese and Lombard carnivals, in which, to say truth, there are sometimes seen rare niceties in the way of representing the old deities.”

“Is it the usage, friend Hofmeister,” demanded the baron, “to enjoy these admirable pleasantries often here in Vaud?”

“We partake of them, from time to time, as the abbaye desires, and much as thou seest. The honourable Signor Grimaldi,—who will pardon me that he gets no better treatment than he receives, and who will not fail to ascribe what, to all who know him, might otherwise pass for inexcusable neglect, to his own desire for privacy—he will tell us, should he be pleased to honour us with his real opinion, that the subject is none the worse for occasions to laugh and be gay. Now, there is

Geneva, a town given to subtleties as ingenious and complicated as the machinery of their own watches; it can never have a merrymaking without a leaven of disputation and reason, two as damnable ingredients in the public humour as schism in religion, or two minds in a *ménage*. There is not a knave in the city who does not fancy himself a better man than Calvin, and some there are who believe if they are not cardinals, it is merely because the reformed church does not relish legs cased in red stockings. By the word of a bailiff! I would not be the ruler, look ye, of such a community, for the hope of becoming Avoyer of Berne itself. Here it is different. We play our antics in the shape of gods and goddesses like sober people, and, when all is over, we go train our vines, or count our herds, like faithful subjects of the great canton. Do I state the matter fairly to our friends, Baron de Blonay?"

Roger de Blonay bit his lip, for he and his

had been of Vaud a thousand years, and he little relished the allusion to the quiet manner in which his countrymen submitted to a compelled and foreign dictation. He bowed a cold acquiescence to the bailiff's statement, however, as if no farther answer were needed.

“We have other ceremonies that invite our attention,” said Melchior de Willading, who had sufficient acquaintance with his friend's opinions to understand his silence.

The next group that approached was composed of those who lived by the products of the dairy. Two cowherds led their beasts, the monotonous tones of whose heavy bells formed a deep and rural accompaniment to the music that regularly preceded each party, while a train of dairy-girls, and of young mountaineers of the class that tend the herds in the summer pasturages, succeeded, a car loaded with the implements of their calling bringing up the rear. In this little procession, no detail of equipment was wanting. The milking-stool was strapped



to the body of the dairyman; one had the peculiarly constructed pail in his hand, while another bore at his back the deep wooden vessel in which milk is carried up and down the precipices to the châlet. When they reached the sodded arena, the men commenced milking the cows, the girls set in motion the different processes of the dairy, and the whole united in singing the Ranz des Vaches of the district. It is generally and erroneously believed that there is a particular air which is known throughout Switzerland by this name, whereas in truth nearly every canton has its own song of the mountains, each varying from the others in the notes, as well as in the words, and we might almost add in the language. The Ranz des Vaches of Vaud is in the patois of the country, a dialect that is composed of words of Greek and Latin origin, mingled on a foundation of Celtic. Like our own familiar tune, which was first bestowed in derision, and which a glorious history has

enabled us to continue in pride, the words are far too numerous to be repeated. We shall, however, give the reader a single verse of a song which Swiss feeling has rendered so celebrated, and which is said often to induce the mountaineer in foreign service to desert the mercenary standard and the tame scenes of towns, to return to the magnificent nature that haunts his waking imagination and embellishes his dreams. It will at once be perceived that the power of this song is chiefly to be found in the recollections to which it gives birth, by recalling the simple charms of rural life, and by reviving the indelible impressions that are made by nature wherever she has laid her hand on the face of the earth with the same majesty as in Switzerland.

Lé zarmailli dei Colombetté  
Dé bon matin, sé san léha.—

REFRAIN.

Ha, ah! ha, ah!  
Liauba! Liauba! por aria.

Venidé toté,  
 Bllantz' et naire,  
 Rodz et motaile,  
 Dzjouvan' et etro  
 Dezó ou tzehano,  
 Io vo z' ario  
 Dezo ou triemblo,  
 Io íe triudzo,  
 Liauba ! Liauba ! por aria.\*

The music of the mountains is peculiar and wild, having most probably received its inspiration from the grandeur of the natural objects. Most of the sounds partake of the character of echoes, being high-keyed but false

\* The cowherds of the Alps  
 Arise at an early hour.

CHORUS.

Ha, ah ! ha, ah !

Liauba ! Liauba ! in order to milk.

Come all of you,  
 Black and white,  
 Red and mottled,  
 Young and old ;  
 Beneath this oak  
 I am about to milk you,  
 Beneath this poplar,  
 I am about to press,  
 Liauba ! Liauba ! in order to milk.

notes; such as the rocks send back to the valleys, when the voice is raised above its natural key in order to reach the caverns and savage recesses of inaccessible precipices. Strains like these readily recall the glens and the magnificence amid which they were first heard, and hence, by an irresistible impulse, the mind is led to indulge in the strongest of all its sympathies, those which are mixed with the unalloyed and unsophisticated delights of buoyant childhood.

The herdsmen and dairymàids no sooner uttered the first notes of this magic song, than a deep and breathing stillness pervaded the crowd. As the peculiar strains of the chorus rose on the ear, murmuring echoes issued from among the spectators, and ere the wild intonations could be repeated which accompanied the words "Liauba! Liauba!" a thousand voices were lifted simultaneously, as it were, to greet the surrounding mountains with the salutations of their children. From that moment the re-

mainder of the Ranz des Vaches was a common burst of enthusiasm, the offspring of that national fervor, which forms so strong a link in the social chain, and which is capable of recalling to the bosom that, in other respects, has been hardened by vice and crime, a feeling of some of the purest sentiments of our nature.

The last strain died amid this general exhibition of healthful feeling. The cowherds and the dairy-girls collected their different implements, and resumed their march to the melancholy music of the bells, which formed a deep contrast to the wild notes that had just filled the square.

To these succeeded the followers of Ceres, with the altar, the priestess, and the enthroned goddess, as has been already described in the approach of Flora. Cornucopiæ ornamented the chair of the deity, and the canopy was adorned with the gifts of autumn. The whole was surmounted by a sheaf of wheat. She held the sickle as her sceptre, and a tiara composed

of the bearded grain covered her brow. Reapers followed, bearing emblems of the season of abundance, and gleaners closed the train. There was the halt, the chant, the chorus, and the song in praise of the beneficent goddess of autumn, as had been done by the votaries of the deity of flowers. A dance of the reapers and gleaners followed, the threshers flourished their flails, and the whole went their way.

After these came the grand standard of the abbaye, and the vine-dressers, the real objects of the festival, succeeded. The labourers of the spring led the advance, the men carrying their picks and spades, and the women vessels to contain the cuttings of the vines. Then came a train bearing baskets loaded with the fruit, in its different degrees of perfection and of every shade of colour. Youths holding staves topped with miniature representations of the various utensils known in the culture of the grape, such as the labourer with the

tub on his back, the butt, and the vessel that first receives the flowing juice, followed. A great number of men, who brought forward the forge that is used to prepare the tools, closed this part of the exhibition. The song and the dance again succeeded, when the whole disappeared at a signal given by the approaching music of Bacchus. As we now touch upon the most elaborate part of the representation, we seize the interval that is necessary to bring it forward, in order to take breath ourselves.

## CHAPTER VI.

And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,  
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine  
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,  
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne.  
*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

“'ODD's my life, but this goes off with a grace, brother Peter!” exclaimed the Baron de Willading, as he followed the vine-dressers in their retreat, with an amused eye — “If we have much more like it, I shall forget the dignity of the bürgerschaft, and turn mummer with the rest, though my good name for wisdom were the forfeit of the folly.”

“That is better said between ourselves than performed before the vulgar eye, honourable



Melchior. It would sound ill, of a truth, were these Vaudois to boast that a noble of thy estimation in Berne were thus to forget himself!"

"None of this! — are we not here to be merry, and to laugh, and to be pleased with any folly that offers? A truce, then, to thy official distrusts and superabundant dignity, honest Peterchen," for such was the good-natured name by which the worthy bailiff was most commonly addressed by his friend; "let the tongue freely answer to the heart, as if we were boys rioting together, as was once the case, long ere thou wert thought of for this office, or I knew a sorrowful hour."

"The Signor Grimaldi shall judge between us; I maintain that restraint is necessary to those in high trusts."

"I will decide when the actors have all played their parts," returned the Genoese, smiling; "at present, here cometh one to whom all old soldiers pay homage. We will not

fail of respect in so great a presence, on account of a little difference in taste."

Peter Hofmeister was not a small drinker, and as the approach of the god of the cup was announced by a flourish from some twenty instruments made to speak on a key suited to the vault of heaven, he was obliged to reserve his opinions for another time. After the passage of the musicians, and a train of the abbaye's servants, for especial honours were paid to the ruby deity, there came three officials of the sacrifice, one leading a goat with gilded horns, while the two others bore the knife and the hatchet. To these succeeded the altar adorned with vines, the incense-bearers, and the high-priest of Bacchus, who led the way for the appearance of the youthful god himself. The deity was seated astride on a cask, his head encircled with a garland of generous grapes, bearing a cup in one hand, and a vine-entwined and fruit-crowned sceptre in the other. Four Nubians carried him on their

shoulders, while others shaded his form with an appropriate canopy ; fauns wearing tiger-skins, and playing their characteristic anticks, danced in his train, while twenty laughing and light-footed Bacchantes flourished their instruments, moving in measure in the rear.

A general shout in the multitude preceded the appearance of Silenus, who was sustained in his place on an ass by two blackamoors. The half-empty skin at his side, the vacant laugh, the foolish eye, the lolling tongue, the bloated lip, and the idiotic countenance, gave reason to suspect that there was a better motive for their support than any which belonged to the truth of the representation. Two youths then advanced, bearing on a pole a cluster of grapes that nearly descended to the ground, and which was intended to represent the fruit brought from Canaan by the messengers of Joshua—a symbol much affected by the artists and mummers of the other hemisphere, on occasions suited to its display. A huge vehicle,

ycleped the ark of Noah closed the procession. It held a wine-press, having its workmen embowered among the vines, and it contained the family of the second father of the human race. As it rolled past traces of the rich liquor were left in the tracks of its wheels.

Then came the sacrifice, the chant, and the dance, as in most of the preceding exhibitions, each of which, like this of Bacchus, had contained allusions to the peculiar habits and attributes of the different deities. The bacchanal that closed the scene was performed in character; the trumpets flourished, and the procession departed in the order in which it had arrived.

Peter relented a little from his usual political reserve as he witnessed these games in honour of a deity to whom he so habitually did practical homage, for it was seldom that this elaborate functionary, who might be termed quite a doctrinaire in his way, composed his senses in sleep, without having pretty effectually steeped

them in the liquor of the neighbouring hills; a habit that was of far more general use among men of his class in that age than in this of ours, which seems so eminently to be the season of sobriety.

“ This is not amiss of a verity ;” observed the contented bailiff, as the Fauns and Bacchantes moved off the sward, capering and cutting their classical antics with far more agility and zeal than grace. “ This looks like the inspiration of good wine, Signior Genoese, and were the truth known, it would be found that the rogue who plays the part of the fat person on the ass—how dost call the knave, noble Melchior ?”

“ Body o’ me ! if I am wiser than thyself, worthy bailiff ; it is clearly a rogue who can never have done his mummerly so expertly, without some aid from the flask.”

“ ’Twill be well to know the fellow’s character, for there may be occasion to commend him to the gentlemen of the abbaye, when all is over. Your skilful ruler has two great instruments

that he need use with discretion, Baron de Willading, and these are, fear and flattery ; and Berne hath no servant more ready to apply both, or either, as there may be necessity, than one of her poor bailiffs that hath not received all his dues from the general opinion, if truth were spoken. But it is well to be prepared to speak these good people of the abbaye fairly, touching their exploits. Harkee, master halberdier ; thou art of Vévey, I think, and a warm citizen in thy every-day character, or my eyes do us both injustice."

"I am, as you have said, Monsieur le Bailli, a Vévaisan, and one that is well known among our artisans."

"True, that was visible, spite of thy halberd. Thou art, no doubt, rarely gifted, and taught to the letter in these games. Wilt name the character that hath just ridden past on the ass—he that hath so well enacted the drunkard, I mean ? His name hath gone out of our minds for the moment, though his acting never

can, for a better performance of one overcome by liquor is seldom seen."

"Lord keep you! worshipful bailiff, that is Antoine Giraud, the fat butcher of La Tour de Peil, and a better at the cup there is not in all the country of Vaud! No wonder that he hath done his part so readily; for, while the others have been reading in books, or drilling like so many awkward recruits under the school-master, Antoine hath had little more to perform than to dip into the skin at his elbow. When the officers of the abbaye complain, lest he should disturb the ceremonies, he bids them not to make fools of themselves, for every swallow he gives is just so much done in honour of the representation; and he swears, by the creed of Calvin! that there shall be more truth in his acting than in that of any other of the whole party."

"'Odds my life! the fellow hath humour as well as good acting in him — this Antoine Giraud! Will you look into the written order

they have given us, fair Adelheid, that we may make sure this artisan-halberdier hath not deceived us? We in authority must not trust a Vévaisan too lightly."

"It will be vain, I fear, Herr Bailiff, since the characters, and not the names of the actors, appear in the lists. The man in question represents Silenus I should think, judging from his appearance and all the other circumstances."

"Well, let it be as thou wilt. Silenus himself could not play his own part better than it hath here been done by this Antoine Giraud. The fellow would gain gold like water at the court of the emperor as a mime, were he only advised to resort thither. I warrant you, now, he would do Pluto, or Minerva, or any other god, just as well as he hath done this rogue Silenus!"

The honest admiration of Peter, who, sooth to say, had not much of the learning of the age, as the phrase is, raised a smile on the lip of the beauteous daughter of the baron,



and she glanced a look to catch the eye of Sigismund, towards whom all her secret sympathies, whether of sorrow or of joy, so naturally and so strongly tended. But the averted head, the fixed attention, and the nearly immoveable and statue-like attitude in which he stood, showed that a more powerful interest drew his gaze to the next group. Though ignorant of the cause of his intense regard, Adelheid instantly forgot the bailiff, his dogmatism, and his want of erudition, in the wish to examine those who approached.

The more classical portion of the ceremonies was now duly observed. The council of the abbaye intended to close with an exhibition that was more intelligible to the mass of the spectators than anything which had preceded it, since it was addressed to the sympathies and habits of every people, and in all conditions of society. This was the spectacle that so engrossingly attracted the attention of Sigismund. It was termed the procession of the nuptials, and it

was now slowly advancing to occupy the space left vacant by the retreat of Antoine Giraud and his companions.

There came in front the customary band, playing a lively air which use has long appropriated to the festivities of Hymen. The lord of the manor, or, as he was termed, the *baron*, and his lady-partner, led the train, both apparelled in the rich and quaint attire of the period. Six ancient couples, the representatives of happy married lives, followed by a long succession of offspring of every age, including equally the infant at the breast and the husband and wife in the flower of their days, walked next to the noble pair. Then appeared the section of a dwelling, which was made to portray the interior of domestic economy, having its kitchen, its utensils, and most of the useful and necessary objects that may be said to compose the material elements of an humble *ménage*. Within this moiety of a house, one female plied the wheel, and ano-

they was occupied in baking. The notary, bearing the register beneath an arm, with hat in hand, and dressed in an exaggerated costume of his profession, strutted in the rear of the two industrious housemaids. His appearance was greeted with a general laugh, for the spectators relished the humour of the caricature with infinite goût. But this sudden and general burst of merriment was as quickly forgotten in the desire to behold the bride and bridegroom, whose station was next to that of the officer of the law. It was understood that these parties were not actors, but that the abbaye had sought out a couple, of corresponding rank and means, who had consented to join their fortunes in reality on the occasion of this great jubilee, thereby lending to it a greater appearance of that genuine joy and festivity which it was the desire of the heads of the association to represent. Such a search had not been made without exciting deep interest in the simple communities which surrounded

Vévey. Many requisites had been proclaimed to be necessary in the candidates — such as beauty, modesty, merit, and the submission of her sex, in the bride; and in her partner those qualities which might fairly entitle him to be the repository of the happiness of a maiden so endowed.

Many had been the speculations of the Vévaisans touching the individuals who had been selected to perform these grave and important characters, which, for fidelity of representation, were to outdo that of Silenus himself; but so much care had been taken by the agents of the abbaye to conceal the names of those they had selected, that, until this moment, when disguise was no longer possible, the public was completely in the dark on the interesting point. It was so usual to make matches of this kind on occasions of public rejoicing, and marriages of convenience, as they are not unaptly termed, enter so completely into the habits of all European communities—perhaps

we might say of all old communities—that common opinion would not have been violently outraged had it been known that the chosen pair saw each other for the second or third time in the procession, and that they had now presented themselves to take the nuptial vow, as it were, at the sound of the trumpet or the beat of drum. Still, it was more usual to consult the inclinations of the parties, since it gave greater zest to the ceremony, and these selections of couples on public occasions were generally supposed to have more than the common interest of marriages, since they were believed to be the means of uniting, through the agency of the rich and powerful, those whom poverty or other adverse circumstances had hitherto kept asunder. Rumour spoke of many an inexorable father who had listened to reason from the mouths of the great, rather than balk the public humour, and thousands of pining hearts, among the obscure and simple, are even now gladdened

at the approach of some joyous ceremony, which is expected to throw open the gates of the prison to the debtor and the criminal, or that of Hymen to those who are richer in constancy and affection than in any other stores.

A general murmur and a common movement betrayed the lively interest of the spectators, as the principal and real actors in this portion of the ceremonies drew near. Adelheid felt a warm glow on her cheek, and a gentler flow of kindness at her heart, when her eye first caught a view of the bride and bridegroom, whom she was fain to believe a faithful pair that a cruel fortune had hitherto kept separate, and who were now willing to brave such strictures as all must encounter who court public attention, in order to receive the reward of their enduring love and self-denial. This sympathy, which was at first rather of an abstract and vague nature, finding its support chiefly in her own peculiar situation and the qualities of her gentle nature, became intensely

heightened, however, when she got a better view of the bride. The modest mien, abashed eye, and difficult breathing of the girl, whose personal charms were of an order much superior to those which usually distinguish rustic beauty in those countries in which females are not exempted from the labours of the field, were so natural and winning as to awaken all her interest; and, with instinctive quickness, the lady of Willading bent her look on the bridegroom, in order to see if one whose appearance was so eloquent in her favour was likely to be happy in her choice. In age, personal appearance, and apparently in condition of life, there was no very evident unfitness, though Adelheid fancied that the mien of the maiden announced a better breeding than that of her companion—a difference which she was willing to ascribe, however, to a greater aptitude in her own sex to receive the first impress of the moral seal, than that which belongs to man.

“She is fair,” whispered Adelheid, slightly

bending her head towards Sigismund, who stood at her side, "and must deserve her happiness."

"She is good, and merits a better fate!" muttered the youth, breathing so hard as to render his respiration audible.

The startled Adelheid raised her eyes, and strong but suppressed agitation was quivering in every lineament of her companion's countenance. The attention of those near was so closely drawn towards the procession, as to allow an instant of unobserved communication."

"Sigismund, this is thy sister!"

"God so cursed her."

"Why has an occasion, public as this, been chosen to wed a maiden of her modesty and manners?"

"Can the daughter of Balthazar be squeamish? Gold, the interest of the Abbaye, and the foolish *éclat* of this silly scene, have enabled my father to dispose of his child to yonder mercenary, who has bargained like a Jew in the affair,



and who, among other conditions, has required that the true name of his bride shall never be revealed. Are we not honoured by a connexion which repudiates us even before it is formed !”

The hollow stifled laugh of the young man thrilled on the nerves of his listener, and she ceased the stolen dialogue to return to the subject at a more favourable moment. In the mean time the procession had reached the station in front of the stage, where the mummers had already commenced their rites.

A dozen groomsmen and as many female attendants accompanied the pair who were about to take the nuptial vow. Behind these came the *trousseau* and the *corbeille* ; the first being that portion of the dowry of the bride which applies to her personal wants, and the last is an offering of the husband, and is figuratively supposed to be a pledge of the strength of his passion. In the present instance the *trousseau* was so ample, and betokened so much liberality, as well as means, on the part of he

friends of a maiden who would consent to become a wife in a ceremony so public, as to create general surprise; while, on the other hand, a solitary chain of gold, of rustic fashion, and far more in consonance with the occasion, was the sole tribute of the swain. This difference between the liberality of the friends of the bride, and that of the individual, who, judging from appearances, had much the most reason to show his satisfaction, did not fail to give rise to many comments. They ended as most comments do, by deductions drawn against the weaker and least defended of the parties. The general conclusion was so uncharitable as to infer that a girl thus bestowed must be under peculiar disadvantages, else would there have been a greater equality between the gifts; an inference that was sufficiently true, though cruelly unjust to its modest but unconscious subject.

While speculations of this nature were rife among the spectators, the actors in the cere-

mony began their dances, which were distinguished by the quaint formality that belonged to the politeness of the age. The songs that succeeded were in honour of Hymen and his votaries, and a few couplets that extolled the virtues and beauty of the bride were chanted in chorus. A sweep appeared at the chimney-top, raising his cry, in allusion to the business of the ménage, and then all moved away, as had been done by those who had preceded them. A guard of halberdiers closed the procession.

That part of the mummeries which was to be enacted in front of the estrade was now ended for the moment, and the different groups proceeded to various other stations in the town, where the ceremonies were to be repeated for the benefit of those who, by reason of the throng, had not been able to get a near view of what had passed in the square. Most of the privileged profited by the pause to leave their seats, and to seek such relaxation as the

confinement rendered agreeable. Among those who entirely quitted the square were the bailiff and his friends, who strolled towards the promenade on the lake-shore, holding discourse, in which there was blended much facetious merriment concerning what they had just seen.

The bailiff soon drew his companions around him, in a deep discussion of the nature of the games, during which the Signor Grimaldi betrayed a malicious pleasure in leading on the dogmatic Peter to expose the confusion that existed in his head touching the characters of sacred and profane history. Even Adelheid was compelled to laugh at the commencement of this ludicrous exhibition, but her thoughts were not long in recurring to a subject in which she felt a nearer and a more tender interest. Sigismund walked thoughtfully at her side, and she profited by the attention of all around them being drawn to the laughable dialogue just mentioned, to renew the subject that had been so lightly touched on before.

“ I hope thy fair and modest sister will never have reason to repent her choice,” she said, lessening her speed, in a manner to widen the distance between herself and those she did not wish to overhear the words, while it brought her nearer to Sigismund ; “ ’tis a frightful violence to all maiden feeling to be thus dragged before the eyes of the curious and vulgar, in a scene trying and solemn as that in which she plights her marriage-vows !”

“ Poor Christine ! her fate from infancy has been pitiable. A purer or milder spirit than her’s, one that more sensitively shrinks from rude collision, does not exist, and yet, on whichever side she turns her eyes, she meets with appalling prejudices or opinions to drive a gentle nature like her’s to madness. It may be a misfortune, Adelheid, to want instruction, and to be fated to pass a life in the depths of ignorance, and in the indulgence of brutal passion, but it is scarcely a blessing to have the

mind elevated above the tasks which a cruel and selfish world so frequently imposes."

"Thou wast speaking of thy mild and excellent sister?—"

"Well hast thou described her! Christine is mild, and more than modest—she is meek. But what can meekness itself do to palliate such a calamity? Desirous of averting the stigma of his family from all he could with prudence, my father caused my sister, like myself, to be early taken from the parental home. She was given in charge to strangers, under such circumstances of secrecy, as left her long, perhaps too long, in ignorance of the stock from which she sprang. When maternal pride led my mother to seek her daughter's society, the mind of Christine was in some measure formed, and she had to endure the humiliation of learning that she was one of a family proscribed. Her gentle spirit, however, soon became reconciled to the truth, at least so far as human obser-

vation could penetrate, and, from the moment of the first terrible agony, no one has heard her murmur at the stern decree of Providence. The resignation of that mild girl has ever been a reproach to my own rebellious temper, for, Adelheid, I cannot conceal the truth from thee —I have cursed all that I dared include in my wicked imprecations, in very madness at this blight on my hopes! Nay, I have even accused my father of injustice, that he did not train me at the side of the block, that I might take a savage pride in that which is now the bane of my existence. Not so with Christine; she has always warmly returned the affection of our parents, as a daughter should love the authors of her being, while I fear I have been repining when I should have loved. Our origin is a curse entailed by the ruthless laws of the land, and it is not to be attributed to any, at least to none of these later days, as a fault, and such has ever been the language of my poor sister when she has seen a merit in their

wishes to benefit us at the expense of their own natural affection. I would I could imitate her reason and resignation !”

“The view taken by thy sister is that of a female, Sigismund, whose heart is stronger than her pride ; and, what is more, it is just.”

“I deny it not ; ’tis just. But the ill-judged mercy has for ever disqualified me to sympathise as I could wish with those to whom I belong. ’Tis an error to draw these broad distinctions between our habits and our affections. Creatures stern as soldiers cannot bend their fancies like pliant twigs, or with the facility of female—”

“Duty ;” said Adelheid gravely, observing that he hesitated.

“If thou wilt, duty. The word has great weight with thy sex, and I do not question that it should have with mine.”

“Thou canst not be wanting in affection for thy father, Sigismund. The manner in which thou interposedst to save his life, when we were



in that fearful jeopardy of the tempest, disproves thy words."

"Heaven forbid that I should be wanting in natural feeling of this sort, and yet, Adelheid, it is horrible not to be able to respect, to love profoundly, those to whom we owe our existence! Christine in this is far happier than I, an advantage that I doubt not she owes to her simple life, and to the closer intimacies which unite females. I am the son of a headsmen; that bitter fact is never absent from my thoughts when they turn to home and those scenes in which I could so gladly take pleasure. Balthazar may have meant a kindness when he caused me to be trained in habits so different from his own, but, to complete the good work, the veil should never have been removed."

Adelheid was silent. Though she understood the feelings which controlled one educated so very differently from those to whom he owed his birth, her habits of thought were

opposed to the indulgence of any reflections that could unsettle the reverence of the child for its parent.

“One of a heart like thine, Sigismund, cannot hate his mother !” she said, after a pause.

“In this thou dost me no more than justice ; my words have ill represented my thoughts, if they have left such an impression. In cooler moments, I have never considered my birth as more than a misfortune, and my education I deem a reason for additional respect and gratitude to my parents, though it may have disqualified me in some measure to enter deeply into their feelings. Christine herself is not more true, nor of more devoted love, than my poor mother. It is necessary, Adelheid, to see and know that excellent woman in order to understand all the wrongs that the world inflicts by its ruthless usages.”

“We will now speak only of thy sister. Has she been here bestowed without regard to her own wishes, Sigismund ?”

“ I hope not. Christine is meek, but, while neither word nor look betrays the weakness, still she feels the load that crushes us both. She has long accustomed herself to look at all her own merits through the medium of this debasement, and has set too low a value on her own excellent qualities. Much, very much depends, in this life, on our own habits of self-estimation, Adelheid ; for he who is prepared to admit unworthiness—I speak not of demerit towards God but towards men—will soon become accustomed to familiarity with a standard below his just pretensions, and will end perhaps in being the thing he dreaded. Such has been the consequence of Christine’s knowledge of her birth, for, to her meek spirit, there is an appearance of generosity in overlooking this grand defect, and it has too well prepared her mind to endow the youth with a hundred more of the qualities that are absolutely necessary to her esteem, but which I fear exist only in her own warm fancy.”

“This is touching on the most difficult branch of human knowledge,” returned Adelheid, smiling sweetly on the agitated brother; “a just appreciation of ourselves. If there is danger of setting too low a value on our merits, there is also some danger of setting too high; though I perfectly comprehend the difference you would make between vulgar vanity, and that self-respect which is certainly in some degree necessary to success. But one, like her thou hast described, would scarce yield her affections without good reason to think them well bestowed.”

“Adelheid, thou who hast never felt the world’s contempt, cannot understand how winning respect and esteem can be made to those who pine beneath its weight! My sister hath so long accustomed herself to think meanly of her hopes, that the appearance of liberality and justice in this youth would have been sufficient of itself to soften her feelings in his favour. I cannot say I think—for Christine will soon be

his wife—but I will say, I fear that the simple fact of his choosing one that the world persecutes has given him a value in her eyes he might not otherwise have possessed.”

“Thou dost not appear to approve of thy sister’s choice?”

“I know the details of the disgusting bargain better than poor Christine,” answered the young man, speaking between his teeth, like one who repressed bitter emotion. “I was privy to the greedy exactions on the one side, and to the humiliating concessions on the other. Even money could not buy this boon for Balthazar’s child, without a condition that the ineffaceable stigma of her birth should be for ever concealed.”

Adelheid saw, by the cold perspiration that stood on the brow of Sigismund, how intensely he suffered, and she sought an immediate occasion to lead his thoughts to a less disturbing subject. With the readiness of her sex, and with the sensitiveness and delicacy of a woman

that sincerely loved, she found means to effect the charitable purpose, without again alarming his pride. She succeeded so far in calming his feelings that, when they rejoined their companions, the manner of the young man had entirely regained the quiet and proud composure in which he appeared to take refuge against the consciousness of the blot that darkened his hopes, frequently rendering life itself a burthen nearly too heavy to be borne.

## CHAPTER VII.

“ — Come apace, good Audrey ; I will fetch  
Up your goats, Audrey : and how, Audrey ? am  
I the man yet ? Doth my simple features content  
You.”

*As You Like It.*

WHILE the mummeries related were exhibiting in the great square, Maso, Pippo, Conrad, and the others concerned in the little disturbance connected with the affair of the dog, were eating their discontent within the walls of the guard-house. Vévey has several squares, and the various ceremonies of the gods and demigods were now to be repeated in the smaller areas. On one of the latter stands the town-house and prison. The offenders in question

had been summarily transferred to the gaol, in obedience to the command of the officer charged with preserving the peace. By an act of grace, however, that properly belonged to the day, as well as to the character of the offence, the prisoners were permitted to occupy a part of the edifice that commanded a view of the square, and consequently were not precluded from all participation in the joyousness of the festivities. This indulgence had been accorded on the condition that the parties should cease their wrangling, and otherwise conduct themselves in a way not to bring scandal on an exhibition in which the pride of every Vévaisan was so deeply enlisted. All the captives, the innocent as well as the guilty, gladly subscribed to the terms; for they found themselves in a temporary duress which did not admit of any fair argument of the merits of the case, and there is no leveller so effectual as a common misfortune.

The anger of Maso, though sudden and



violent, the effect of a hot temperament, had quickly subsided in a calm which more probably belonged to his education and opinions, in all of which he was much superior to his profligate antagonist. Contempt, therefore, soon took the place of resentment; and though too much accustomed to rude contact with men of the pilgrim's class to be ashamed of what had occurred, the mariner strove to forget the occurrence. It was one of those moral disturbances to which he was scarcely less used than he was accustomed to encounter physical contests of the elements like that in which he had lately rendered so essential service on the Leman.

"Give me thy hand, Conrad;" he said, with the frank forgiveness which is apt to distinguish the reconciliation of men who pass their lives amid the violent, but sometimes ennobling, scenes of adventure and lawlessness. "Thou hast thy humours and habits, and I have mine. If thou findest this traffic in penances and prayers to thy fancy, follow the trade, of

Heaven's sake, and leave me and my dog to live by other means !”

“Thou ought'st to have bethought thee how much reason we pilgrims have to prize the mastiffs of the mountain,” answered Conrad, “and how likely it was to stir my blood to see another cur devouring that which was intended for old Uberto. Thou hast never toiled up the sides of St. Bernard, friend Maso, loaded with the sins of a whole parish, to say nothing of thine own, and therefore can'st not know the value of these brutes, who so often stand between us pilgrims and a grave of snow.”

Il Maledetto smiled grimly, and muttered a sentence between his teeth ; for, in perfect consonance with the frank lawlessness of his own life, there was a reckless honesty in his nature, which caused him to despise hypocrisy as unworthy of the bold attributes of manhood.

“Have it as thou wilt, pious Conrad,” he said sneeringly, “so there be peace between us. I am, as thou knowest, an Italian, and though

we of the south seek revenge occasionally of those who wrong us, it is not often that we do violence after giving a willing palm—I trust ye of Germany are no less honest?”

“May the Virgin be deaf to every ave I have sworn to repeat, and the good fathers of Loretto refuse absolution, if I think more of it! ’Twas but the gripe of a throat, and I am not so tender in that part of the body as to fear it is to be the forerunner of a closer squeeze. Did’st ever hear of a churchman that suffered in this way?”

“Men often escape with less than their deserts;” Maso drily answered. “Well, fortune, or the saints, or Calvin, or whatever power most suits your tastes, good friends, has at length put a roof over our heads,—an honour that rarely arrives to most of us, if I may judge by appearances and some little knowledge of the different trades we follow. Thou wilt have a fair occasion to suffer Policinello to rest from his uneasy antics, Pippo,

while his master breathes the air through a window for the first time in many a day, as I will answer."

The Neapolitan had no difficulty in laughing at this sally; for his was a nature that took all things pleasantly, though it took nothing under the corrective of principle or a respect for the rights of others.

"Were this Napoli, with her gentle sky and hot volcano," he said, smiling at the allusion, "no one would have less relish for a roof than myself."

"Thou wast born beneath the arch of some Duca's gateway," returned Maso, with a sort of reckless sarcasm, that as often cut his friends as his enemies; "thou wilt probably die in the hospital of the poor, and wilt surely be shot from the death-cart into one of the daily holes of thy Campo Santo, among a goodly company of Christians, in which legs and arms will be thrown at random like jack-straws, and in which the wisest among ye all will be

puzzled to tell his own limbs from those of his neighbours, at the sound of the last trumpet."

"Am I a dog, to meet this end!" demanded Pippo, fiercely — "or that I should not know my own bones from those of some infidel rascal, who may happen to be my neighbour?"

"We have had one disturbance about brutes, let us not have another;" sarcastically rejoined Il Maledetto. "Princes and nobles," he added, with affected gravity, "we are here bound by the heels, during the good pleasure of those who rule in Vévey; the wisest course will be to pass the time in good humour with each other, and as pleasantly as our condition will allow. The reverend Conrad shall have all the honours of a Cardinal, Pippo shall have the led horse at his funeral, and, as for these worthy Vaudois, who, no doubt, are men of substance in their way, they shall be bailiffs sent by Berne to rule between the four walls of our palace! Life is but a graver sort of mum-

mery, gentlemen, and the second of its rarest secrets is to make others fancy us what we wish to appear—the first being, without question, the faculty of deceiving ourselves. Now each one has only to imagine that he is the high personage I have just named, and the most difficult part of the work is achieved to his hands.”

“Thou hast forgotten to name thine own quality,” cried Pippo, who was too much used to buffoonery not to relish the whim of Maso, and who, with Neapolitan fickleness, forgot his anger the instant he had given it vent.

“I will represent the sapient public, and, being well disposed to be duped, the whole job is complete. Practice away, worthies, and ye shall see with what open eyes and wide gullet I am ready to admire and swallow all your philosophy.”

This sally produced a hearty laugh, which rarely fails to establish momentary good fellowship. The Vaudois, who had the thirsty pro-

pensities of mountaineers, ordered wine, and, as their guardians looked upon their confinement more as a measure of temporary policy than of serious moment, the command was obeyed. In a short time, this little group of worldlings were making the best of circumstances, by calling in the aid of physical stimulants to cheer their solitude. As they washed their throats with the liquor, which was both good and cheap and by consequence doubly agreeable, the true characters of the different individuals began to show themselves in stronger colours.

The peasants of Vaud, of whom there were three and all of the lowest class, became confused and dull in their faculties though louder and more vehement in speech, each man appearing to balance the increasing infirmities of his reason by stronger physical demonstrations of folly.

Conrad, the pilgrim, threw aside the mask entirely, if, indeed, so thin a veil as that he ordinarily wore when not in the presence of his

employers deserved such a name, and appeared the miscreant he truly was,—a strange admixture of cowardly superstition, (for few meddle with superstition without getting more or less entangled in its meshes,) of low cunning, and of the most abject and gross sensuality and vice. The invention and wit of Pippo, at all times ready and ingenious, gained increased powers, but the torrent of animal spirits that were let loose by his potations swept before it all reserve, and he scarce opened his mouth but to betray the thoughts of a man long practised in frauds and all other evil designs on the rights of his fellow-creatures. On Maso the wine produced an effect that might almost be termed characteristic, and which it is in some sort germane to the moral of the tale to describe.

Il Maledetto had indulged freely and with apparent recklessness in the frequent draughts. He was long familiarized to the habits of this



wild and uncouth fellowship, and a singular sentiment, that men of his class choose to call honour, and which perhaps deserves the name as much as half of the principles that are described by the same appellation, prevented him from refusing to incur an equal risk in the common assault on their faculties, inducing him to swallow his full share of the intoxicating fluid as the cup passed from one reeking mouth to another. He liked the wine, too, and tasted its perfume, and cherished its glowing influence, with the perfect good-will of a man who knew how to profit by the accident which placed such generous liquor at his command. He had also his designs in wishing to unmask his companions, and he thought the moment favourable to such an intention. In addition to these motives, Maso had his especial reasons for being uneasy at finding himself in the hands of the authorities, and he was not sorry to bring about a state of things that might lead to his being confounded

with the others in a group of vulgar devotees of Bacchus.

But Maso yielded to the common disposition in a manner peculiar to himself. His eyes became even more lustrous than usual, his face reddened, and his voice even grew thick, while his senses retained their powers. His reason, instead of giving way, like those of the men around him, rather brightened under the excitement, as if it foresaw the danger it incurred, and the greater necessity there existed for vigilance. Though born in a southern clime, he was saturnine and cold when unexcited, and such temperaments rather gain their tone than lose their powers by stimulants under which men of feebler organizations sink. He had passed his life amid wild adventure and in scenes of peril which suited such a disposition, and it most probably required either some strong motive of danger, like that of the tempest on the Lemman, or a stimulant of another quality, to draw out the latent properties of

his mind, which so well fitted him to lead when others were the most disposed to follow. He was, therefore, without fear for himself while he aroused his companions; and he was free of his purse, which did not, however, appear to be sufficiently stored to answer very heavy demands, by ordering cup after cup to supply the place of those which were so quickly drained to the dregs. In this manner an hour or two passed swiftly, they who were charged with the care of the jolly party in the town-house being much more occupied in noting the festivities without, than those within, the prison.

“Thou hast a merry life of it, honest Pip-po,” cried Conrad with swimming eyes, answering a remark of the buffoon. “Thou art but a laugh at the best, and wilt go through the world grinning and making others grin. Thy Policinello is a rare fellow, and I never meet one of thy set that weary legs and sore feet are not forgotten in his fooleries!”

“Corpo di Bacco!—I wish this were so;

but thou hast much the best of the matter, even in the way of amusement, reverend pilgrim, though to the looker-on it would seem otherwise. The difference between us, pious Conrad, is just this—that thou laughest in thy sleeve without seeming to be merry, whereas I yawn ready to split my jaws while I seem to be dying with fun. Your often-told joke is a bad companion, and gets at last to be as gloomy as a dirge. Wine can be swallowed but once, and laughter will not come for ever for the same folly. Cospetto! I would give the earnings of a year for a set of new jokes, such as might come fresh from the wit of one who never saw a mountebank, and are not worn threadbare with being rubbed against the brains of all the jokers in Europe.”

“There was a wise man of old, of whom it is not probable that any of you have ever heard,” observed Maso, “who has said there was nothing new under the sun.”

“He who said that never tasted of this

liquor, which is as raw as if it were still running from the press," rejoined the pilgrim. "Knave, dost think that we are unknowing in these matters, that thou darest bring a pot of such lees to men of our quality? Go to, and see that thou doest us better justice in the next!"

"The wine is the same as that which first pleased you, but it is in the nature of drunkenness to change the palate; and therein Solomon was right, as in all other points," coolly remarked Il Maledetto. "Nay, friend, thou wilt scarce bring thy liquors again to those who do not know how to do them proper honour."

Maso thrust the lad who served them from the room, and he slipped a small coin in his hand, ordering him not to return. Inebriety had made sufficient ravages for his ends, and he was now desirous of stopping farther excesses.

"Here come the mummers—gods and goddesses, shepherds and their lasses, and all the other pleasantries, to keep us in humour! To

do these Vévaisans justice, they treat us rarely; for ye see they send their players to amuse our retirement !”

“ Wine ! liquor ! raw or ripe, bring us liquor !” roared Conrad, Pippo, and their pot-companions, who were much too drunk to detect the agency of Maso in defeating their wishes, though they were just drunk enough to fancy that what he said of the attention of the authorities was not only true but merited.

“ How now, Pippo ! art ashamed to be outdone in thine own craft, that thou bellowest for wine at the moment when the actors have come into the square to exhibit their skill ?” cried the mariner. “ Truly, we shall have a mean opinion of thy merit if thou art afraid to meet a few Vaudois peasants in thy trade,—and thou a buffoon of Napoli !”

Pippo swore with pot-oaths that he defied the cleverest of Switzerland; for that he had not only acted on every mall and mole of Italy, but that he had exhibited in private before

princes and cardinals, and that he had no superior on either side of the Alps. Maso profited by his advantage, and by applying fresh goads to his vanity, soon succeeded in causing him to forget the wine, and in drawing him, with all the others, to the windows.

The processions, in making the circuit of the city, had now reached the square of the town-house, where the acting and exhibition were repeated, as has been already related in general terms to the reader. There were the officers of the abbaye, the vine-dressers, the shepherds and shepherdesses, Flora, Ceres, Pales, and Bacchus, with all the others, attended by their several trains, and borne in state as became their high attributes. Silenus rolled from his ass, to the great joy of a thousand shouting blackguards and to the infinite scandal of the prisoners at the windows, the latter affirming to a man that there was no acting in the case, but that the demi-god was shame-

fully under the influence of too many potations that had been swallowed in his own honour.

We shall not go over the details of these scenes, which all who have ever witnessed a public celebration will readily imagine, nor is it necessary to record the different sallies of wit that, under the inspiration of the warm wines of Vévey and the excitement of the revels, issued from the group that clustered around the windows of the prison. All who have ever listened to low humour, that is rather deadened than quickened by liquor, will understand their character, and they who have not will scarcely be losers by the omission.

At length the different allegories drawn from the heathen mythology ended, and the procession of the nuptials came into the square. The meek and gentle Christine had appeared nowhere that day without awakening strong sympathy in her youth, beauty, and apparent innocence. Murmurs of approbation accom-



panied her steps, and the maiden, more accustomed to her situation, began to feel, probably for the first time since she had known the secret of her origin, something like that security which is an indispensable accompaniment of happiness. Long used to think of herself as one proscribed of opinion, and educated in the retirement suited to the views of her parents, the praises that reached her ear could not but be grateful, and they went warm and cheerily to her heart, in spite of the sense of apprehension and uneasiness that had so long harboured there. Throughout the whole of the day, until now, she had scarce dared to turn her eyes to her future husband, him who, in her simple and single-minded judgment, had braved prejudice to do justice to her worth; but, as the applause, which had been hitherto suppressed, broke out in loud acclamations in the square of the town-house, the colour mantled brightly on her cheek, and she looked with modest pride at her companion, as if

she would say in the silent appeal, that his generous choice would not go entirely without its reward. The crowd responded to the sentiment, and never did votaries of Hymen approach the altar seemingly under happier auspices.

The influence of innocence and beauty is universal. Even the unprincipled and half-intoxicated prisoners were loud in praise of the gentle Christine. One praised her modesty, another extolled her personal appearance, and all united with the multitude in shouting to her honour. The blood of the bridegroom began to quicken, and, by the time the train had halted in the open space near the building, immediately beneath the windows occupied by Maso and his fellows, he was looking about him in the exultation of a vulgar mind, which finds its delight in, as it is apt to form its judgments from, the suffrages of others.

“Here is a grand and beautiful festa!” said the hiccoughing Pippo, “and a most willing

bride! San Gennaro bless thee, *bella sposina*, and the worthy man who is the stem of so fair a rose! Send us wine, generous groom and happy bride, that we may drink to the health of thee and thine!"

Christine changed colour, and looked furtively around, for they who lie under the weight of the world's displeasure, though innocent, are sensitively jealous of allusions to the sore points in their histories. The feeling communicated itself to her companion, who threw distrustful glances at the crowd, in order to ascertain if the secret of his bride's birth were not discovered.

"A braver festa never honoured an Italian corso," continued the Neapolitan, whose head was running on his own fancies, without troubling itself about the apprehensions and wishes of others. "A gallant array and a fair bride! Send us wine, *felicissimi sposi*, that we may drink to your eternal fame and happiness! Happy the father that calls thee

daughter, bella sposa, and most honoured the mother that bare so excellent a child ! Scellerati, ye of the crowd, why do ye not bear the worthy parents in your arms, that all may see and do homage to the honourable roots of so rich a branch ! Send us wine, buona gente, send us cups of merry wine !”

The cries and figurative language of Pippo attracted the attention of the multitude, who were additionally amused by the mixture of dialects in which he uttered his appeals. The least important trifles, by giving a new direction to popular sympathies, frequently become the parents of grave events. The crowd, which followed the train of Hymen, had begun to weary with the repetition of the same ceremonies, and it now gladly lent itself to the episode of the felicitations and entreaties of the half-intoxicated Neapolitan.

“ Come forth, and act the father of the happy bride, thyself, reverend and grave stranger ;” cried one in derision, from the throng. “ So

excellent an example will descend to thy children's children, in blessings on thy line !”

A shout of laughter rewarded this retort. It put the quick-witted Neapolitan on his mettle, to produce a prompt and suitable reply.

“ My blessing on the blushing rose !” he answered in an instant. “ There are worse parents than Pippo, for he who lives by making others laugh deserves well of men, whereas there is your medico, who eats the bread of cholics, and rheumatisms, and other foul diseases, of which he pretends to be the enemy, though, San Gennaro to aid !—who is there so silly, as not to see that the knavish doctor and the knavish distemper play into each other's hands, as readily as Policinello and the monkey.”

“ Hast thou another worse than thyself that can be named,” cried he of the crowd.

“ A score, and thou shalt be of the number. My blessing on the fair bride ; thrice happy is

she that hath a right to receive the benediction from one of so honest life as the merry Pippo. Speak not I the truth, figligiola?"

Christine perceived that the hand of her companion was coldly releasing her own, and she felt the creeping sensation of the blood which is the common attendant of extreme and humiliating shame. Still she bore up against the weakness, with that deep reliance on the justice of others which is usually the most strongly seated in those who are the most innocent; and she followed the procession, in its circuit, with a step whose trembling was mistaken for no more than the embarrassment natural to her situation.

At this moment, as the mummers were wheeling past the town-house, and the air was filled with music while a general movement stirred the multitude, a cry of alarm arose in the building. It was immediately succeeded by such a rush of bodies towards the spot, as indicates, in a throng, a sudden and ge-

neral interest in some new and extraordinary event.

The crowd was beaten back and dispersed, the procession had disappeared, and there was an unusual appearance of activity and mystery among the officials of the place, before the cause of this disturbance began to be whispered among the few who remained in the square. The rumour ran that one of the prisoners, an athletic Italian mariner, had profited by the attention of all the other guardians of the place being occupied by the ceremonies, to knock down the solitary sentinel, and to effect his escape, followed by all the drunkards who were able to run.

The evasion of a few lawless blackguards from their prison was not an event likely long to divert the attention of the curious from the amusements of the day, especially as it was understood that their confinement would have terminated of itself with the setting sun. But

when the fact was communicated to Peter Hofmeister, the sturdy bailiff swore fifty harsh oaths at the impudence of the knaves, at the carelessness of their keepers, and in honour of the good cause of justice in general. After which he incontinently commanded that the runaways should be apprehended. This material part of the process achieved, he moreover ordered that they should be brought forthwith into his presence, even should he be engaged in the most serious of the ceremonies of the day. The voice of Peter speaking in anger was not likely to be unheard, and the stern mandate had scarcely issued from his lips, when a dozen of the common thief-takers of Vaud set about the affair in good earnest, and with the best possible intentions to effect their object. In the mean time the sports continued, and, as the day drew on, and the hour for the banquet approached, the good people began to collect once more in the great square to witness the



closing scenes, and to be present at the nuptial benediction, which was to be pronounced over Jacques Colis and Christine by a real servitor of the altar, as the last and most important of the ceremonies of that eventful day.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Ay, marry ; now unmuzzle your wisdom.

ROSALIND.

THE hour of noon was past, when the stage was a second time filled with the privileged. The multitude was again disposed around the area of the square, and the bailiff and his friends once more occupied the seats of honour in the centre of the long estrade. Procession after procession now began to reappear, for all had made the circuit of the city, and each had repeated its mummeries so often that the actors grew weary of their sports. Still, as the several groups came again into the high pre-

sence of the bailiff and the élite not only of their own country but of so many others, pride overcame fatigue, and the songs and dances were renewed with the necessary appearance of good will and zeal. Peter Hofmeister and divers others of the magnates of the canton, were particularly loud in their plaudits on this repetition of the games, for, by a process that will be easily understood, they, who had been revelling and taking their potations in the marquees and booths while the mummers were absent, were more than qualified to supply the deficiencies of the actors by the warmth and exuberance of their own warmed imaginations. The bailiff, in particular, as became his high office and determined character, was unusually talkative and decided, both as respects the criticisms and encomiums he uttered on the various performances, making as light of his own peculiar qualifications to deal with the subject, as if he were a common hack-reviewer of our own times, who is known to

keep in view the quantity rather than the quality of his remarks, and the stipulated price he is to receive per line. Indeed the parallel would hold good in more respects than that of knowledge, for his language was unusually captious and supercilious, his tone authoritative, and his motive the desire to exhibit his own endowments, rather than the wish he affected to manifest of setting forth the excellences of others. His speeches were more frequently than ever directed to the Signor Grimaldi, for whom there had suddenly arisen in his mind a still stronger gusto than that he had so liberally manifested, and which had already drawn so much attention to the deportment of this pleasing but modest stranger. Still he never failed to compel all, within reach of a reasonable exercise of his voice, to listen to his oracles.

“Those that have passed, brother Melchior,” said the bailiff, addressing the Baron de Willading, in the fraternal style of the

bürgerschaft, while his eye was directed to the Genoese, in whom in reality he wished to excite admiration for his readiness in Heathen lore “are no more than shepherds and shepherdesses of our mountains, and none of your gods and demigods, the former of which are to be known in this ceremony from all others by the fact that they are carried on men’s shoulders, and the latter that they ride on asses, or have other conveniences natural to their wants. Ah! here we have the higher orders of the mummers in person—this comely creature is, in reality, Mariette Marron of this country, as strapping a wench as there is in Vaud, and as impudent—but no matter! She is now the Priestess of Flora, and I’ll warrant you there is not a horn in all our valleys that will bring a louder echo out of the rocks than this very priestess will raise with her single throat! That yonder on the throne is Flora herself, represented by a comely young woman, the daughter of a warm citizen here in

Vévey, and one able to give her all the equipments she bears, without taxing the abbaye a doit. I warrant you that every flower about her was culled from their own garden !”

“Thou treatest the poetry of the ceremonies with so little respect, good Peterchen, that the goddess and her train dwindle into little more than vine-dressers and milk-maids beneath thy tongue.”

“Of Heaven’s sake, friend Melchior,” interrupted the amused Genoese, “do not rob us of the advantage of the worthy bailiff’s graphic remarks. Your Heathen may be well enough in his way, but surely he is none the worse for a few notes and illustrations, that would do credit to a Doctor of Padova. I entreat you to continue, learned Peter, that we strangers may lose none of the niceties of the exhibition.”

“Thou seest, baron,” returned the well-warmed bailiff, with a look of triumph, “a little explanation can never injure a good thing, though it were even the law itself. Ah !

yon is Ceres and her company, and a goodly train they appear ! These are the harvest-men and harvest-women, who represent the abundance of our country of Vaud, Signor Grimaldi, which, truth to say, is a fat land, and worthy of the allegory. These knaves, with the stools strapped to their nether parts, and carrying tubs, are cowherds, and all the others are more or less concerned with the dairy. Ceres was a personage of importance among the ancients, beyond dispute, as may be seen by the manner in which she is backed by the landed interest. There is no solid respectability, Herr von Willading, that is not fairly bottomed on broad lands. Ye perceive that the goddess sits on a throne whose ornaments are all taken from the earth ; a sheaf of wheat tops the canopy ; rich ears of generous grain are her jewels, and her sceptre is the sickle. These are but allegories, Signor Grimaldi, but they are allusions that give birth to wholesome thoughts in the prudent. There is no science that may not catch a hint

from our games ; politics, religion, or law—'tis all the same for the well-disposed and cunning."

"An ingenious scholar might even find an argument for the *bürgerschaft* in an allegory that is less clear;" returned the amused Genoese. "But you have over-looked, Signor Bailiff, the instrument that Ceres carries in the other hand, and which is full to overflowing with the fruits of the earth;—that which so much resembles a bullock's horn, I mean."

"That is, out of question, some of the utensils of the ancients; perhaps a milking vessel in use among the gods and goddesses, for your deities of old were no bad housewives, and made a merit of their economy, and Ceres here, as is seen, is not ashamed of a useful occupation. By my faith, but this affair has been gotten up with a very creditable attention to the moral! But our dairy-people are about to give us some of their airs."

Peterchen now put a stop to his classic



lore, while the followers of Ceres arranged themselves in order, and began to sing. The contagious and wild melody of the Ranz des Vaches rose in the square, and soon drew the absorbed and delighted attention of all within hearing, which, to say the truth, was little less than all who were within the limits of the town, for, the crowd chiming in with the more regular artists, a sort of musical enthusiasm seized upon all present who came of Vaud and her valleys. The dogmatical, but well-meaning bailiff, though usually jealous of his Bernese origin, and alive on system to the necessity of preserving the superiority of the great canton by all the common observances of dignity and reserve, yielded to the general movement, and shouted with the rest, under favour of a pair of lungs that nature had admirably fitted to sustain the chorus of a mountain song. This condescension in the deputy of Berne was often spoken of afterwards with admiration, the simple-minded and credu-

lous ascribing the exaltation of Peterchen to a generous warmth in their happiness and interests, while the more wary and observant were apt to impute the musical excess to a previous excess of another character, in which the wines of the neighbouring côtes were fairly entitled to come in for a full share of the merit. Those who were nearest the bailiff were secretly much diverted with his awkward attempts at graciousness, which one fair and witty Vaudoise likened to the antics of one of the celebrated animals that are still fostered in the city which ruled so much of Switzerland, and from whom, indeed, the town and canton are both vulgarly supposed to have derived their common name; for, while the authority of Berne weighed so imperiously and heavily on its subsidiary countries, as is usual in such cases, the people of the latter were much addicted to taking an impotent revenge, by whispering the pleasantest sarcasms they could invent against their masters. Notwithstanding this and

many more similar criticisms on his performance, the bailiff enacted his part in the representation to his own entire satisfaction ; and he resumed his seat with a consciousness of having at least merited the applause of the people, for having entered with so much spirit into their games, and with the hope that this act of grace might be the means of causing them to forget some fifty, or a hundred, of his other acts, which certainly had not possessed the same melodious and companionable features.

After this achievement the bailiff was reasonably quiet, until Bacchus and his train again entered the square. At the appearance of the laughing urchin who bestrode the cask, he resumed his dissertations with a confidence that all are apt to feel, who are about to treat on a subject with which they have had occasion to be familiar.

“ This is the god of good liquor,” said Peterchen, always speaking to any who would listen,

although, by an instinct of respect, he chiefly preferred favouring the Signor Grimaldi with his remarks, "as may plainly be seen by his seat; and these are dancing attendants to show that wine gladdens the heart;—yonder is the press at work, extracting the juices, and that huge cluster is to represent the grapes which the messengers of Joshua brought back from Canaan when sent to spy out the land, a history which I make no doubt you Signore, in Italy, have at your fingers' ends."

Gaetano Grimaldi looked embarrassed, for, although well skilled in the lore of the heathen mythology, his learning as a male papist and a laic was not particularly rich in the story of the Christian faith. At first he supposed that the bailiff had merely blundered in his account of the mythology, but, by taxing his memory a little, he recovered some faint glimpses of the truth, a redemption of his character as a book-man for which he was materially indebted to having seen some celebrated pic-

tures on this very subject, a species of instruction in holy writ that is sufficiently common among those who inhabit the Catholic countries of the other hemisphere.

“Thou surely hast not overlooked the history of the gigantic cluster of grapes, Signore !” exclaimed Peterchen, astonished at the apparent hesitation of the Italian. “’Tis the most beautiful of all the legends of the holy book. Ha ! as I live there is the ass without his rider ;—what has become of the blackguard, Antoine Giraud ? The rogue has alighted to swallow a fresh draught from some booth, after draining his own skin to the bottom. This comes of neglect ; a sober man, or at least one of a harder head, should have been put to the part ;—for, look you, ’tis a character that need stand at least a gallon, since the rehearsals alone are enough to take a common drinker off his centre.”

The tongue of the bailiff ran on in accompaniment, during the time that the fol-

lowers of Bacchus were going through with their songs and pageants, and when they disappeared, it gained a louder key, like the "rolling river that murmuring flows and flows for ever," rising again on the ear, after the din of any adventitious noise has ceased.

"Now we may expect the pretty bride and her maids," continued Peterchen, winking at his companions, as the ancient gallant is wont to make a parade of his admiration of the fair; "the solemn ceremony is to be pronounced here, before the authorities, as a suitable termination to this happy day. Ah! my good old friend Melchior, neither of us is the man he was, or these skipping hoydens would not go through their pirouettes without some aid from our arms! Now, dispose of yourselves, friends; for this is to be no acting, but a downright marriage, and it is meet that we keep a graver air. How! what means the movement among the officers?"

Peterchen had interrupted himself, for just

at that moment the thief-takers entered the square in a body, enclosing in their centre a group, who had the mien of captives too evidently to be mistaken for honest men. The bailiff was peculiarly an executive officer; one of that class who believe that the enactment of a law is a point of far less interest than its due fulfilment. Indeed, so far did he push his favourite principle, that he did not hesitate sometimes to suppose shades of meaning in the different ordinances of the great council that existed only in his own brain, but which were, to do him justice, sufficiently convenient to himself in carrying out the constructions which he saw fit to put on his own duties. The appearance of an affair of justice was unfortunate for the progress of the ceremonies, Peterchen having some such relish for the punishment of rogues, and more especially for such as seemed to be an eternal reproach to the action of the Bernese system by their incorrigible misery and poverty, as an old

coachman is proverbially said to retain for the crack of the whip. All his judicial sympathies were not fully awakened, on the present occasion, however; the criminals, though far from belonging to the more lucky of their fellow-creatures, not being quite miserable enough in appearance to awaken all those powers of magisterial reproach and severity that lay dormant in the bailiff's moral temperament, ready, at any time, to vindicate the right of the strong against the innovations of the feeble and unhappy. The reader will at once have anticipated that the prisoners were Maso and his companions, who had been more successful in escaping from their keepers, than fortunate in evading the attempts to secure their persons a second time.

“Who are these that dare affront the ruling powers on this day of general good-will and rejoicing?” sternly demanded the bailiff, when the minions of the law and their captives stood fairly before him. “Do ye not know,



knaves, that this is a solemn, almost a religious ceremony at Vévey—for so it would be considered by the ancients at least—and that a crime is doubly a crime when committed either in an honourable presence, on a solemn and dignified occasion, like this, or against the authorities ;—this last being always the gravest and greatest of all ?”

“ We are but indifferent scholars, worshipful bailiff, as you may easily perceive by our outward appearance, and are to be judged leniently,” answered Maso. “ Our whole offence was a hot but short quarrel touching a dog, in which hands were made to play the part of reason, and which would have done little harm to any but ourselves, had it been the pleasure of the town authorities to have left us to decide the dispute in our own way. As you well say, this is a joyous occasion, and we esteem it hard that we of all in Vévey should be shut up on account of so light an affair, and cut off from the merriment of the rest.”

“There is reason in this fellow, after all,” said Peterchen, in a low voice. “What is a dog more or less to Berne, and a public rejoicing to produce its end should go deep into the community. Let the men go, of God’s name! and look to it, that all the dogs be beaten out of the square, that we have no more of this folly.”

“Please you, these are the men that have escaped from the authorities, after knocking down their keeper;” the officer humbly observed.

“How is this! Did’st thou not say, fellow, that it was all about a dog?”

“I spoke of the reason of our being shut up. It is true that, wearied with breathing pent air, and a little heated with wine, we left the prison without permission; but we hope this little sally of spirit will be overlooked on account of the extraordinary occasion.”

“Rogue, thy plea augments the offence. A crime committed on an extraordinary occa-

sion becomes an extraordinary crime, and requires an extraordinary punishment, which I intend to see inflicted, forthwith. You have insulted the authorities, and that is the unpardonable sin in all communities. Draw nearer, friends, for I love to let my reasons be felt and understood by those who are to be affected by my decisions, and this is a happy moment, to give a short lesson to the Vévaisans—let the bride and bridegroom wait—draw nearer all, that ye may better hear what I have to say.”

The crowd pressed more closely around the foot of the stage, and Peterchen, assuming a didactic air, resumed his discourse.

“The object of all authority is to find the means of its own support,” continued the bailiff; “for unless it can exist, it must fall to the ground; and you all are sufficiently schooled to know that when a thing becomes of indifferent value, it loses most of its consideration. Thus government is established in order that it may protect itself; since without this

power it could not remain a government, and there is not a man existing who is not ready to admit that even a bad government is better than none. But ours is particularly a good government, its greatest care on all occasions being to make itself respected, and he who respects himself is certain to have esteem in the eyes of others. Without this security we should become like the unbridled steed, or the victims of anarchy and confusion, ay, and damnable heresies in religion. Thus you see, my friends, your choice lies between the government of Berne, or no government at all; for when only two things exist, by taking one away the number is reduced half, and as the great canton will keep its own share of the institutions, by taking half away, Vaud is left as naked as my hand. Ask yourselves if you have any government but this? You know you have not. Were you quit of Berne, therefore, you clearly would have none at all. Officer, you have a sword at your side which is a good type of our autho-

rity; draw it, and hold it up, that all may see it. You perceive, my friends, that the officer hath a sword; but that he hath only one sword. Lay it at thy feet, officer. You perceive, friends, that having but one sword, and laying that sword aside, he no longer hath a sword at all! That weapon represents our authority, which laid aside becomes no authority, leaving us with an unarmed hand."

This happy comparison drew a murmur of applause; the proposition of Peterchen having most of the properties of a popular theory, being deficient in neither a bold assertion, a brief exposition, nor a practical illustration. The latter in particular was long afterwards spoken of in Vaud, as an exposition little short of the well-known judgment of Solomon, who had resorted to the same keen-edged weapon in order to solve a point almost as knotty as this settled by the bailiff. When the approbation had a little subsided, the warmed Peterchen continued his discourse, which possessed

the random and generalized logic of most of the dissertations that are uttered in the interests of things as they are, without paying any particular deference to things as they should be.

“What is the use of teaching the multitude to read and write?” he asked. “Had not Franz Kauffman known how to write, could he have imitated his master’s hand, and would he have lost his head for mistaking another man’s name for his own? a little reflection shows us he would not. Now, as for the other art, could the people read bad books had they never learned the alphabet? If there is a man present who can say to the contrary, I absolve him from his respect, and invite him to speak boldly, for there is no Inquisition in Vaud, but we invite argument. This is a free government, and a fatherly government, and a mild government, as ye all know; but it is not a government that likes reading and writing; reading that leads to the perusal of

bad books, and writing that causes false signatures. Fellow-citizens, for we are all equal, with the exception of certain differences that need not now be named, it is a government for your good, and therefore it is a government that likes itself, and which ought to like itself, and whose first duty is to protect itself and its officers at all hazards, even though it might by accident commit some seeming injustice.—Fellow, canst thou read?”

“Indifferently, worshipful bailiff,” returned Maso. “There are those who get through a book with less trouble than myself.”

“I warrant you, now, he means a good book; but, as for a bad one, I’ll engage the varlet goes through it like a wild boar! This comes of education among the ignorant! There is no more certain method to corrupt a community, and to rivet it in beastly practices than to educate the ignorant. The enlightened can bear knowledge, for rich food does not harm the stomach that is used to it, but it

is hellebore to the ill-fed. Education is an arm, for knowledge is power, and the ignorant man is but an infant, and to give him knowledge is like putting a loaded blunderbuss into the hands of a child. What can an ignorant man do with knowledge? He is as likely to use it wrong end uppermost as in any other manner. Learning is a ticklish thing; it was said by Festus to have maddened even the wise and experienced Paul, and what may we not expect it to do with your downright ignoramus? What is thy name, prisoner?"

"Tommaso Santi; sometimes known among my friends as San Tommaso; called by my enemies, Il Maledetto, and by my familiars, Maso."

"Thou hast a formidable number of aliases, the certain sign of a rogue. Thou hast confessed that thou canst read——,"

"Nay, Signor Bailiff, I would not be taken to have said——"

"By the faith of Calvin, thou did'st confess



it, before all this 'goodly company! Wilt deny thine own words, knave, in the very face of justice? Thou 'can'st read—thou hast it in thy countenance, and I would go nigh to swear, too, that thou hast some inkling of the quill, were the truth honestly said. Signor Grimaldi, I know not how you find this affair on the other side of the Alps, but with us, our greatest troubles come from these well-taught knaves, who, picking up knowledge fraudulently, use it with felonious intent, without thought of the wants and rights of the public."

"We have our difficulties, as is the fact wherever man is found with his selfishness and passions, Signor Bailiff; but are we not doing an ungallant act towards yonder fair bride, by giving the precedence to men of this cast? Would it not be better to dismiss the modest Christine, happy in Hymen's chains, before we enter more deeply into the question of the manacles of these prisoners?"

To the amazement of all who knew the

bailiff's natural obstinacy, which was wont to increase instead of becoming more manageable in his cups, Peterchen assented to this proposition with a complaisance and apparent good-will, that he rarely manifested towards any opinion of which he did not think himself legitimately the father; though, like many others who bear that honourable title, he was sometimes made to yield the privileges of paterinity to other men's children. He had shown an unusual deference to the Italian, however, throughout the whole of their short intercourse, and on no occasion was it less equivocal, than in the promptness with which he received the present hint. The prisoners and officers were commanded to stand aside, but so near as to remain beneath his eye, while some of the officials of the abbaye were ordered to give notice to the train, which awaited these arrangements in silent wonder, that it might now approach.

## CHAPTER IX.

Go, wiser thou ! and in thy scale of sense  
Weigh thy opinion against Providence ;  
Call imperfection what thou fanciest such ;  
Say, here he gives too little, there too much ;  
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,  
And say, if man 's unhappy, God 's unjust.

POPE.

It is unnecessary to repeat the list of characters that acted the different parts in the train of the village nuptials. All were there at the close of the ceremonies, as they had appeared earlier in the day, and as the last of the legal forms of the marriage was actually to take place in presence of the bailiff, preparatory to the more solemn rites of the church,

the throng yielded to its curiosity, breaking through the line of those who were stationed to restrain its inroads, and pressing about the foot of the estrade in the stronger interest which reality is known to possess over fiction. During the day, a thousand new inquiries had been made concerning the bride, whose beauty and mien were altogether so superior to what might have been expected in one who could consent to act the part she did on so public an occasion, and whose modest bearing was in such singular contradiction to her present situation. None knew, however, or, if it were known, no one chose to reveal her history; and, as curiosity had been so keenly whetted by mystery, the rush of the multitude was merely a proof of the power which expectation, aided by the thousand surmises of rumour, can gain over the minds of the idle.

Whatever might have been the character of the conjectures made at the expense of poor Christine--and they were wanting in neither

variety nor malice—most were compelled to agree in commending the diffidence of her air, and the gentle sweetness of her mild and peculiar beauty. Some, indeed, affected to see artifice in the former, which was pronounced to be far too excellent, or too much overdone, for nature. The usual amount of common-place remarks were made, too, on the lucky diversity that was to be found in tastes, and on the happy necessity there existed of all being able to find the means to please themselves. But these were no more than the moral blotches that usually disfigure human commendation. The sentiment and the sympathies of the mass was powerfully and irresistibly enlisted in favour of the unknown maiden—feelings that were very unequivocally manifested as she drew nearer the estrade, walking timidly through a dense lane of bodies, all of which were pressing eagerly forward to get a better view of her person.

The bailiff, under ordinary circumstances,

would have taken in dudgeon this violation of the rules prescribed for the government of the multitude ; for he was perfectly sincere in his opinions, absurd as so many of them were, and, like many other honest men who defeat the effects they would produce by forced constructions of their principles, he was a little apt to run into excesses of discipline. But in the present instance, he was rather pleased than otherwise to see the throng within the reach of his voice. The occasion was, at best, but semi-official, and he was so far under the influence of the warm liquors of the côtes as to burn with the desire of putting forth still more liberally his flowers of eloquence and his stores of wisdom. He received the inroad, therefore, with an air of perfect good-humour, a manifestation of assent that encouraged still greater innovations on the limits, until the space occupied by the principal actors in this closing scene was reduced to the smallest possible size that was at all compatible with their

movements and comforts. In this situation of things the ceremonies proceeded.

The gentle flow of hope and happiness which was slowly increasing in the mild bosom of the bride, from the first moment of her appearance in this unusual scene to that in which it was checked by the cries of Pippo, had been gradually lessening under a sense of distrust, and she now entered the square with a secret and mysterious dread at the heart, which her inexperience and great ignorance of life served fearfully to increase. Her imagination magnified the causes of alarm into some prepared and designed insult. Christine, fully aware of the obloquy that pressed upon her race, had only consented to adopt this unusual mode of changing her condition, under a sensitive apprehension that any other would have necessarily led to the exposure of her origin. This fear, though exaggerated, and indeed causeless, was the result of too much brooding of late over her own situation, and of that morbid sensibility

in which the most pure and innocent are, unhappily, the most likely to indulge. The concealment, as has already been explained, was that of her intended husband, who, with the subterfuge of an interested spirit, had hoped to mislead the little circle of his own acquaintances and gratify his cupidity at the cheapest possible rate to himself. But there is a point of self-abasement beyond which the perfect consciousness of right rarely permits even the most timid to proceed. As the bride moved up the lane of human bodies, her eye grew less disturbed and her step firmer, —for the pride of rectitude overcame the ordinary girlish sensibilities of her sex, and made her the steadiest at the very instant that the greater portion of females would have been the most likely to betray their weakness. She had just attained this forced but respectable tranquillity, as the bailiff, signing to the crowd to hush its murmurs and to remain motionless, arose, with a manner that he in-



tended to be dignified, and which passed with the multitude for a very successful experiment in its way, to open the business in hand by a short address. The reader is not to be surprised at the volubility of honest Peterchen, for it was getting to be late in the day, and his frequent libations throughout the ceremonies would have wrought him up to even a much higher flight of eloquence, had the occasion and the company at all suited such a display of his powers.

“We have had a joyous day, my friends,” he said; “one whose excellent ceremonies ought to recall to every one of us our dependence on Providence, our frail and sinful dispositions, and particularly our duties to the councils. By the types of plenty and abundance, we see the bounty of nature, which is a gift from Heaven; by the different little failures that have been, perhaps, unavoidably made in some of the nicer parts of the exhibition—and I would here particularly mention the besotted drunkenness of Antoine

Giraud, the man who has impudently undertaken to play the part of Silenus, as a fit subject of your attention, for it is full of profit to all hard-drinking knaves—we may see our own awful imperfections ; while, in the order of the whole, and the perfect obedience of the subordinates, do we find a parallel to the beauty of a vigilant and exact police and a well-regulated community. Thus you see, that though the ceremony hath a heathen exterior, it hath a Christian moral ; God grant that we all forget the former, and remember the latter, as best becomes our several characters and our common country. And now, having done with the divinities and their legends—with the exception of that varlet Silenus, whose misconduct, I promise you, is not to be so easily overlooked—we will give some attention to mortal affairs. Marriage is honourable before God and man, and although I have never had leisure to enter into this holy state myself, owing to a variety of reasons, but chiefly from

my being wedded, as it were, to the State, to which we all owe quite as much, or even greater duty, than the most faithful wife owes to her husband, I would not have you suppose that I have not a high veneration for matrimony. So far from this, I have looked on no part of this day's ceremonies with more satisfaction than these of the nuptials, which we are now called upon to complete in a manner suitable to the importance of the occasion. Let the bridegroom and the bride stand forth, that all may the better see the happy pair."

At the bidding of the bailiff, Jacques Colis led Christine upon the little stage prepared for their reception, where both were more completely in view of the spectators than they had yet been. The movement, and the agitation consequent on so public an exposure, deepened the bloom on the soft cheeks of the bride, and another and a still less equivocal murmur of applause arose in the multitude. The spectacle of youth, innocence, and feminine love-

liness, strongly stirred the sympathies of even the most churlish and rude, and most present began to feel for her fears, and to participate in her hopes.

“ This is excellent ! ” continued the well-pleased Peterchen, who was never half so happy as when he was officially providing for the happiness of others ; “ it promises a happy *ménage*. A loyal, frugal, industrious, and active groom, with a fair and willing bride, can drive discontent up any man’s chimney. That which is to be done next, being legal and binding, must be done with proper gravity and respect. Let the notary advance—not him who hath so aptly played this character, but the commendable and upright officer who is rightly charged with these respectable functions—and we will listen to the contract. I recommend a decent silence, my friends, for the true laws and real matrimony are at the bottom,—a grave affair, at the best, and one never to be treated with levity ; since a few

words pronounced now in haste may be repented of for a whole life hereafter."

Every thing was conducted according to the wishes of the bailiff, and with great decency of form. A true and authorised notary read aloud the marriage-contract, the instrument which contained the civic relations and rights of the parties, and which only waited for the signatures to be complete. This document required, of course, that the real names of the contracting parties, their ages, births, parentage, and all those facts which are necessary to establish their identity, and to secure the rights of succession, should be clearly set forth in a way to render the instrument valid at the most remote period, should there ever arrive a necessity to recur to it in the way of testimony. The most eager attention pervaded the crowd as they listened to these little particulars, and Adelheid trembled in this delicate part of the proceedings, as the suppressed but still audible breathing of Sigismund reached her ear, lest

something might occur to give a rude shock to his feelings. But it would seem the notary had his cue. The details touching Christine were so artfully arranged, that while they were perfectly binding in law, they were so dexterously concealed from the observation of the unsuspecting, that no attention was drawn to the point most apprehended by their exposure. Sigismund breathed freer when the notary drew near the end of his task, and Adelheid heard the heavy breath he drew at the close, with the joy one feels at the certainty at having passed an imminent danger. Christine herself seemed relieved, though her inexperience in a great degree prevented her from foreseeing all that the greater practice of Sigismund had led him to anticipate.

“ This is quite in rule, and nought now remains but to receive the signatures of the respective parties and their friends ;” resumed the bailiff. “ A happy ménage is like a well-ordered state, a foretaste of the joys and peace

of Heaven ; while a discontented household and a turbulent community may be likened at once to the penalties and the pains of hell ! Let the friends of the parties step forth, in readiness to sign when the principals themselves shall have discharged this duty."

A few of the relatives and associates of Jacques Colis moved out of the crowd and placed themselves at the side of the bridegroom, who immediately wrote his own name, like a man impatient to be happy. A pause succeeded, for all were curious to see who claimed affinity to the trembling girl on this the most solemn and important event of her life. An interval of several minutes elapsed, and no one appeared. The respiration of Sigismund became more difficult ; he seemed about to choke, and then yielding to a generous impulse, he arose.

" For the love of God !—for thine own sake !—for mine ! be not too hasty !" whispered the terrified Adelheid ; for she saw the hot glow that almost blazed on his brow.

“ I cannot desert poor Christine to the scorn of the world, in a moment like this ! If I die of shame, I must go forward and own myself.”

The hand of Mademoiselle de Willading was laid upon his arm, and he yielded to this silent but impressive entreaty, for just then he saw that his sister was about to be relieved from her distressing solitude. The throng yielded, and a decent pair, attired in the guise of small but comfortable proprietors, moved doubtingly towards the bride. The eyes of Christine filled with tears, for terror and the apprehension of disgrace yielded suddenly to joy. Those who advanced to support her in that moment of intense trial were her father and mother. The respectable-looking pair moved slowly to the side of their daughter, and, having placed themselves one on each side of her, they first ventured to cast furtive and subdued glances at the multitude.

“ It is doubtless painful to the parents to part with so fair and so dutiful a child,”



resumed the obtuse Peterchen, who rarely saw in any emotion more than its most commonplace and vulgar character; "Nature pulls them one way, while the terms of the contract and the progress of our ceremonies pull another. I have often weaknesses of this sort myself, the most sensitive hearts being the most liable to these attacks. But my children are the public, and do not admit of too much of what I may call the detail of sentiment, else, by the soul of Calvin! were I but an indifferent bailiff for Berne!—Thou art the father of this fair and blushing maiden, and thou her mother?"

"We are these;" returned Balthazar mildly.

"Thou art not of Vévey, or its neighbourhood, by thy speech?"

"Of the great canton, mein Herr;" for the answer was in German, these contracted districts possessing nearly as many dialects as there are territorial divisions. "We are strangers in Vaud."

“Thou hast not done the worse for marrying thy daughter with a Vévaisan, and, more especially, under the favour of our renowned and liberal Abbaye. I warrant me thy child will be none the poorer for this compliance with the wishes of those who lead our ceremonies!”

“She will not go portionless to the house of her husband,” returned the father, colouring with secret pride; for to one to whom the chances of life left so few sources of satisfaction, those that were possessed became doubly dear.

“This is well! A right worthy couple! And, I doubt not, a meet companion will your offspring prove. Monsieur le Notaire, call off the names of these good people aloud, that they may sign, at least, with a decent parade.”

“It is settled otherwise,” hastily answered the functionary of the quill, who was necessarily in the secret of Christine’s origin, and who had been well bribed to observe discretion.

“ It would altogether derange the order and regularity of the proceedings.”

“ As thou wilt ; for I would have nothing illegal, and least of all, nothing disorderly. But o’ Heaven’s sake ! let us get through with our penmanship, for I hear there are symptoms that the meats are likely to be overbaked. Can’st thou write, good man ?”

“ Indifferently, mein Herr ; but in a way to make what I will binding before the law.”

“ Give the quill to the bride, Mr. Notary, and let us protract the happy event no longer.”

The bailiff here bent his head aside and whispered to an attendant to hurry towards the kitchens and to look to the affairs of the banquet. Christine took the pen with a trembling hand and pallid cheek, and was about to apply it to the paper, when a sudden cry from the throng diverted the attention of all present to a new matter of interest.

“ Who dares thus indecently interrupt this

grave scene, and that, too, in so great a presence?" sternly demanded the bailiff.

Pippo, who with the other prisoners had unavoidably been enclosed in the space near the estrade by the pressure of the multitude, staggered more into view, and removing his cap with a well-managed respect, presented himself humbly to the sight of Peterchen.

"It is I, illustrious and excellent governor," returned the wily Neapolitan, who retained just enough of the liquor he had swallowed to render him audacious, without weakening his means of observation. "It is I, Pippo; an artist of humble pretensions, but, I hope, a very honest man, and, as I know, a great reverencer of the laws and a true friend to order."

"Let the good man speak up boldly. A man of these principles has a right to be heard. We live in a time of damnable innovations, and of most atrocious attempts to overturn the altar, the state, and the public

trusts, and the sentiments of such a man are like dew to the parched grass."

The reader is not to imagine, from the language of the bailiff, that Vaud stood on the eve of any great political commotion, but, as the Government was in itself an usurpation, and founded on the false principle of exclusion, it was quite as usual then, as now, to cry out against the moral throes of violated right, since the same eagerness to possess, the same selfishness in grasping, however unjustly obtained, and the same audacity of assertion with a view to mystify, pervaded the Christian world a century since as exist to-day. The cunning Pippo saw that the bait had taken, and, assuming a still more respectful and loyal mien, he continued:—

"Although a stranger, illustrious governor, I have had great delight in these joyous and excellent ceremonies. Their fame will be spread far and near, and men will talk of little less for the coming year but of Vévey and its festival.

But a great scandal hangs over your honourable heads which it is in my power to turn aside, and, San Gennaro forbid! that I, a stranger, that hath been well entertained in your town, should hesitate about raising his voice on account of any scruples of modesty. No doubt, great governor, your eccellenza believes that this worthy Vévaisan is about to wive a creditable maiden, whose name could be honourably mentioned with those of the ceremonies and your town, before the proudest company in Europe?"

"What of this, fellow? The girl is fair, and modest enough, at least to the eye, and if thou knowest aught else, whisper thy secret to her husband or her friends, but do not come in this rude manner to disturb our harmony with thy raven throat, just as we are ready to sing an epithalamium in honour of the happy pair. Your excessive particularity is the curse of wedlock, my friends, and I have a great mind to send this knave, in spite of all this

profession of order, which is like enough to produce disorder, for a month or two into our Vévey dungeon for his pains."

Pippo was staggered, for just drunk enough to be audacious, he had not all his faculties at his perfect command, and his usual acumen was a little at fault. Still, accustomed to brave public opinion, and to carry himself through the failures of his exhibitions by heavier drafts on the patience and credulity of his audience, he determined to persevere as the most likely way of extricating himself from the menaced consequences of his indiscretion.

"A thousand pardons, great bailiff;" he answered. "Nought, but a burning desire to do justice to your high honour, and to the reputation of the abbaye's festival, could have led me so far, but—"

"Speak thy mind at once, rogue, and have done with circumlocution."

"I have little to say, Signore, except that the father of this illustrious bride, who is

about to honour Vévey by making her nuptials an occasion for all in the city to witness and to favour, is the common headsman of Berne—a wretch who lately came near to prove the destruction of more christians than the law has condemned, and who is sufficiently out of favour with heaven to bring the fate of Gomorrah upon your town!”

Pippo tottered to his station among the prisoners, with the manner of one who had delivered himself of an important trust, and was instantly lost to view. So rapid and unlooked for had been the interruption, and so vehement the utterance of the Italian while delivering his facts, that, though several present saw their tendency when it was too late, none had sufficient presence of mind to prevent the exposure. A murmur arose in the crowd, which stirred like a vast sheet of fluid on which a passing gust had alighted, and then became fixed and calm. Of all present, the bailiff manifested the least surprise or concern, for to



him the last minister of the law was an object, if not precisely of respect, of politic good will rather than of dishonour.

“What of this!” he answered, in the way of one who had expected a far more important revelation. “What of this, should it be true! Harkee, friend,—art thou, in sooth, the noted Balthazar, he to whose family the canton is indebted for so much fair justice?”

Balthazar saw that his secret was betrayed, and that it were wiser simply to admit the facts, than to have recourse to subterfuge or denial. Nature, moreover, had made him a man with strong and pure propensities for the truth, and he was never without the innate consciousness of the injustice of which he had been made the victim by the unfeeling ordinance of society. Raising his head, he looked around him with firmness, for he too, unhappily, had been accustomed to act in the face of multitudes, and he answered the question of

the bailiff, in his usual mild tone of voice, but with composure.

“Herr Bailiff, I am by inheritance the last avenger of the law.”

“By my office! I like the title; it is a good one! The last avenger of the law! If rogues will offend, or dissatisfied spirits plot, there must be a hand to put the finishing blow to their evil works, and why not thou as well as another! Harkee, officers, shut me up yonder Italian knave for a week on bread and water, for daring to trifle with the time and good nature of the public in this impudent manner. And this worthy dame is thy wife, honest Balthazar; and that fair maiden thy child—Hast thou more of so goodly a race?”

“God has blessed me in my offspring, mein Herr.”

“Ay; God hath blessed thee!—and a great blessing it should be, as I know by bitter experience—that is, being a bachelor, I understand the misery of being childless—I would

say no more. Sign the contract, honest Balthazar, with thy wife and daughter, that we may have an end of this."

The family of the proscribed were about to obey this mandate, when Jacques Colis abruptly threw down the emblems of a bridegroom, tore the contract in fragments, and publicly announced that he had changed his intention, and that he would not wive a headsmen's child. The public mind is usually caught by any loud declaration in favour of the ruling prejudice, and, after the first brief pause of surprise was past, the determination of the groom was received with a shout of applause that was immediately followed by general, coarse, and deriding laughter. The throng pressed upon the keepers of the limits in a still denser mass, opposing an impenetrable wall of human bodies to the passage of any in either direction, and a dead stillness succeeded, as if all present breathlessly awaited the result of the singular scene.

So unexpected and sudden was the purpose of the groom, that they who were most affected by it, did not, at first, fully comprehend the extent of the disgrace that was so publicly heaped upon them. The innocent and unpractised Christine stood resembling the cold statue of a vestal, with the pen raised ready to affix her as yet untarnished name to the contract, in an attitude of suspense, while her wondering look followed the agitation of the multitude, as the startled bird, before it takes wing, regards a movement among the leaves of the bush. But there was no escape from the truth. Conviction of its humiliating nature came too soon, and, by the time the calm of intense curiosity had succeeded to the momentary excitement of the spectators, she was standing an exquisite but painful picture of wounded feminine feeling and of maiden shame. Her parents, too, were stupified by the suddenness of the unexpected shock, and it was longer before their faculties recovered the

tone proper to meet an insult so unprovoked and gross.

“This is unusual ;” drily remarked the bailiff, who was the first to break the long and painful silence.

“It is brutal !” warmly interposed the Signor Grimaldi. “Unless there has been deception practised on the bridegroom, it is utterly without excuse.”

“Your experience, Signore, has readily suggested the true points in a very knotty case, and I shall proceed without delay to look into its merits.”

Sigismund resumed his seat, his hand releasing the sword-hilt that it had spontaneously grasped, when he heard this declaration of the bailiff’s intentions.

“For the sake of thy poor sister, forbear !” whispered the terrified Adelheid. “All will yet be well—all must be well—it is impossible that one so sweet and innocent should long remain with her honour unavenged !”

The young man smiled frightfully, at least so it seemed to his companion : but he maintained the appearance of composure. In the mean time Peterchen, having secretly despatched another messenger to the cooks, turned his serious attention to the difficulty that had just arisen.

“ I have long been entrusted by the council with honourable duties,” he said, “ but never, before to-day, have I been required to decide upon a domestic misunderstanding, before the parties were actually wedded. This is a grave interruption of the ceremonies of the abbaye, as well as a slight upon the notary and the spectators, and needs be well looked to. Dost thou really persist in putting this unusual termination to a marriage-ceremony, Herr Bridegroom ?”

Jacques Colis had lost a little of the violent impulse which led him to the precipitate and inconsiderate act of destroying an instrument he had legally executed, but his outbreking

of feeling was followed by a sullen and fixed resolution to persevere in the refusal at every hazard to himself.

“I will not wive the daughter of a man hunted of society, and avoided by all;” he doggedly answered.

“No doubt the respectability of the parent, is the next thing to a good dowry, in the choice of a wife,” returned the bailiff, “but one of thy years has not come hither, without having first inquired into the parentage of her thou wert about to wed?”

“It was sworn to me that the secret should be kept. The girl is well endowed, and a promise was solemnly made that her parentage should never be known. The family of Colis is esteemed in Vaud, and I would not have it said that the blood of the headsman of the canton hath mixed in a stream as fair as ours.”

“And yet thou wert not unwilling, so long as the circumstance was unknown? Thy ob-

jection is less to the fact, than its public exposure."

"Without the aid of parchments and tongues, Monsieur le Bailli, we should all be equal in birth. Ask the noble Baron de Willading, who is seated there at your side, why he is better than another. He will tell you that he is come of an ancient and honourable line; but had he been taken from his castle in infancy, and concealed under a feigned name, and kept from men's knowledge as being that he is, who would think of him for the deeds of his ancestors? As the Sire de Willading would, in such a case, have lost in the world's esteem, so did Christine gain; but as opinion would return to the baron, when the truth should be published, so does it desert Balthazar's daughter, when she is known to be a headsman's child. I would have married the maiden as she was, but, your pardon, Monsieur le Bailli, if I say, I will not wive her as she is."



A murmur of approbation followed this plausible and ready apology, for, when antipathies are active and bitter, men are easily satisfied with a doubtful morality and a weak argument.

“This honest youth hath some reason in him;” observed the puzzled bailiff, shaking his head. “I would he had been less expert in disputation, or that the secret had been better kept ! It is apparent as the sun in the heavens, friend Melchior, that had’st thou not been known as thy father’s child, thou would’st not have succeeded to thy castle and lands—nay, by St. Luke ! not even to the rights of the bürgerschaft.”

“In Genoa we are used to hear both parties,” gravely rejoined the Signor Grimaldi, “that we may first make sure that we touch the true merits of the case. Were another to claim the Signor de Willading’s honours and name, thou would’st scarce grant his suit, with-

out questioning our friend here, touching his own rights to the same."

"Better and better! This is justice, while that which fell from the bridegroom was only argument. Harkee, Balthazar, and thou good woman, his wife—and thou too, pretty Christine—what have ye all to answer to the reasonable plea of Jacques Colis?"

Balthazar, who, by the nature of his office, and by his general masculine duties, had been so much accustomed to meet with harsh instances of the public hatred, soon recovered his usual calm exterior, even though he felt a father's pang and a father's just resentment at witnessing this open injury to one so gentle and deserving as his child. But the blow had been far heavier on Marguerite, the faithful and long-continued sharer of his fortunes. The wife of Balthazar was past the prime of her days, but she still retained the presence, and some of the personal beauty,

which had rendered her, in youth, a woman of extraordinary mien and carriage. When the words which announced the slight to her daughter first fell on her ears, she paled to the hue of the dead. For several minutes she stood looking more like one that had taken a final departure from the interests and emotions of life, than one that, in truth, was a prey to one of the strongest passions the human breast can ever entertain, that of wounded maternal affection. Then, the blood stole slowly to her temples, and, by the time the bailiff put his question, her entire face was glowing under a tumult of feeling that threatened to defeat its own wishes, by depriving her of the power of speech.

“Thou can’st answer him, Balthazar,” she said huskily, motioning for her husband to arouse his faculties; “thou art used to these multitudes and to their scorn.—Thou art a man, and canst do us justice.”

“Herr Bailiff,” said the headsman, who sel-

dom lost the mild deportment that characterised his manner, "there is much truth in what Jacques hath urged, but all present may have seen that the fault did not come of us, but of yonder heartless vagabond. The wretch sought my life on the lake in our late unfortunate passage hither; and, not content with wishing to rob my children of their father, he comes now to injure me still more cruelly. I was born to the office I hold, as you well know, Herr Hofmeister, or it would never have been sought by me; but what the law wills, men insist upon as right. This girl can never be called upon to strike a head from its shoulders, and, knowing from childhood up the scorn that awaits all who come of my race, I sought the means of releasing her, at least, from some part of the curse that hath descended on us."

"I know not if this were legal!" interrupted the bailiff, quickly. "What is your opinion, Herr von Willading? Can any in Berne escape their heritable duties, any more than heredi-

tary privileges can be assumed? This is a grave question; innovation leads to innovation, and our venerable laws and our sacred usages must be preserved, if we would avert the curse of change!"

"Balthazar hath well observed that a female cannot exercise the executioner's office."

"True, but a female may bring forth them that can. This is a cunning question for the doctors-in-law, and it must be examined; of all damnable offences, heaven keep me from that of a wish for change. If change is ever to follow, why establish? Change is the unpardonable sin in politics, Signor Grimaldi; since that which is often changed becomes valueless in time, even if it be coin."

"The mother hath something she would utter," said the Genoese, whose quick but observant eye had been watching the workings of the countenances of the repudiated family, while the bailiff was digressing in his usual prolix manner on things in general, and who

detected the throes of feeling which heaved the bosom of the respectable Marguerite, in a way to announce a speedy birth to her thoughts.

“Hast thou aught to urge, good woman?” demanded Peterchen, who was well enough disposed to hear both sides in all cases of controversy, unless they happened to touch the supremacy of the great canton. “To speak the truth, the reasons of Jacques Colis are plausible and witty, and are likely to weigh heavy against thee?”

The colour slowly disappeared from the brow of the mother, and she turned such a look of fondness and protection on her child, as spoke a complete condensation of all her feelings in the engrossing sentiment of a mother's love.

“Have I aught to urge!” slowly repeated Marguerite, looking steadily about her at the curious and unfeeling crowd, which, bent on the indulgence of its appetite for novelty, and excited by its prejudices, still pressed upon

the halberds of the officers—"Has a mother aught to say in defence of her injured and insulted child! Why hast thou not also asked, Herr Hofmeister, if I am human? We come of proscribed races, I know, Balthazar and I, but like thee, proud bailiff, and the privileged at thy side, we come too of God! The judgment and power of men have crushed us from the beginning, and we are used to the world's scorn and to the world's injustice!"

"Say not so, good woman, for no more is required than the law sanctions. Thou art now talking against thine own interests, and I interrupt thee, in pure mercy. 'Twould be scandalous in me to sit here and listen to one that hath bespattered the law with an evil tongue."

"I know nought of the subtleties of thy laws, but well do I know their cruelty and wrongs, as respects me and mine! All others come into the world with hope, but we have been crushed from the beginning. That surely

cannot be just which destroys hope. Even the sinner need not despair, through the mercy of the Son of God ! but we, that have come into the world under thy laws, have little before us in life but shame and the scorn of men !”

“ Nay, thou quite mistakest the matter, dame ; these privileges were first bestowed on thy families in reward for good services, I make no doubt, and it was long accounted profitable to be of this office.”

“ I do not say, that, in a darker age, when oppression stalked over the land, and the best were barbarous as the worst to-day, some of those of whom we are born may not have been fierce and cruel enough to take upon themselves this office with good will ; but I deny that any short of Him who holds the universe in his hand, and who controls an endless future to compensate for the evils of the present time, has the power to say to the son, that he shall be the heritor of the father’s wrongs !”

“ How ! dost question the doctrine of de-



scents? We shall next hear thee dispute the rights of the bürgerschaft !”

“ I know nothing, Herr Bailiff, of the nice distinctions of your rights in the city, and wish to utter nought, for or against. But an entire life of contumely and bitterness is apt to become a life of thoughtfulness and care ; and I see sufficient difference between the preservation of privileges fairly earned, though even these may and do bring with them abuses hard to be borne, and the unmerited oppression of the offspring for the ancestors’ faults. There is little of that justice which savours of Heaven in this, and the time will come when a fearful return will be made for wrongs so sore !”

“ Concern for thy pretty daughter, good Marguerite, causes thee to speak strongly.”

“ Is not the daughter of a headsman and a headsman’s wife their offspring, as much as the fair maiden who sits near thee is the child of the noble at her side ? Am I to love her less, that she is despised by a cruel world ?

Had I not the same suffering at the birth, the same joy in the infant smile, the same hope in the childish promise, and the same trembling for her fate when I consented to trust her happiness to another, as she that bore that more fortunate but not fairer maiden hath had in her? Hath God created two natures—two yearnings for the mother—two longings for our childrens' weal—those of the rich and honoured, and those of the crushed and despised?"

"Go to, good Marguerite; thou puttest the matter altogether in a manner that is unusual. Are our reverenced usages nothing—our solemn edicts—our city's rule—and our resolution to govern, and that fairly and with effect?"

"I fear that these are stronger than the right, and likely to endure when the tears of the oppressed are exhausted, when they and their fates shall be forgotten!"

"Thy child is fair and modest," observed the Signor Grimaldi, "and will yet find a youth who will more than atone for this in-

jury. He that has rejected her was not worthy of her faith !”

Marguerite turned her look, which had been glowing with awakened feeling, on her pale and still motionless daughter. The expression of her eyes softened, and she folded her child to her bosom, as the dove shelters its young. All her aroused feelings appeared to dissolve in the sentiment of love.

“ My child is fair, Herr Peter ;” she continued, without adverting to the interruption ; “ but better than fair, she is good ! Christine is gentle and dutiful, and not for a world would she bruise the spirit of another as her’s has been this day bruised. Humbled as we are, and despised of men, bailiff, we have our thoughts, and our wishes, and our hopes, and memory, and all the other feelings of those that are more fortunate ; and when I have racked my brain to reason on the justice of a fate which has condemned all of my race to have little other communion with their kind but that of blood,

and when bitterness has swollen at my heart, ay, near to bursting, and I have been ready to curse Providence and die, this mild, affectionate girl hath been near to quench the fire that consumed me, and to tighten the cords of life, until her love and innocence have left me willing to live even under a heavier load than this I bear. Thou art of an honoured race, bailiff, and canst little understand most of our suffering; but thou art a man, and shouldst know what it is to be wounded through another, and that one who is dearer to thee than thine own flesh."

"Thy words are strong, good Marguerite," again interrupted the bailiff, who felt an uneasiness, of which he would very gladly be rid. "Himmel! Who can like any thing better than his own flesh? Besides, thou shouldst remember that I am a bachelor, and bachelors are apt, naturally, to feel more for their own flesh than for that of others. Stand aside, and let the procession pass, that we may go to the

banquet, which waits. If Jacques Colis will none of thy girl, I have not the power to make him. Double the dowry, good woman, and thou shalt have a choice of husbands, in spite of the axe and the sword that are in thy escutcheon. Let the halberdiers make way for those honest people there, who, at least, are functionaries of the law, and are to be protected as well as ourselves."

The crowd obeyed, yielding readily to the advance of the officers, and, in a few minutes, the useless attendants of the village nuptials, and the train of Hymen slunk away, sensible of the ridicule that, in a double degree, attaches itself to folly, when it fails of effecting even its own absurdities.

## CHAPTER X.

The weeping blood in woman's breast  
Was never known to thee ;  
Nor the balm that drops on wounds of woe  
From woman's pitying e'e.

BURNS.

A LARGE portion of the curious followed the disconcerted mummers from the square, while others hastened to break their fasts at the several places selected for this important feature in the business of the day. Most of those who had been on the estrade now left it, and, in a few minutes, the living carpet of heads around the little area in front of the bailiff was reduced to a few hundreds of those whose better feelings were stronger than their

self-indulgence. Perhaps this distribution of the multitude is about in the proportion that is usually found, in those cases in which selfishness draws in one direction, while feeling or sympathy with the wronged pulls in another, among all masses of human beings that are congregated as spectators of some general and indifferent exhibition of interests in which they have no near personal concern.

The bailiff and his immediate friends, the prisoners, and the family of the headsman, with a sufficient number of the guards, were among those who remained. The bustling Peterchen had lost some of his desire to take his place at the banquet, in the difficulties of the question which had arisen, and in the certainty that nothing material, in the way of gastronomy, would be attempted until he appeared. We should do injustice to his heart, did we not add, also, that he had troublesome qualms of conscience, which intuitively admonished him that the world had dealt

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hardly with the family of Balthazar. There remained the party of Maso, too, to dispose of, and his character of an upright as well as of a firm magistrate to maintain. As the crowd diminished, however, he and those near him descended from their high places, and mixed with the few who occupied the still guarded area in front of the stage.

Balthazar had not stirred from his riveted posture near the table of the notary, for he shrunk from encountering, in the company of his wife and daughter, the insults to which he should be exposed now his character was known, by mingling with the crowd, and he waited for a favourable moment to withdraw unseen. Marguerite still stood folding Christine to her bosom, as if jealous of farther injury to her beloved. The recreant bridegroom had taken the earliest opportunity to disappear, and was seen no more in Vévey during the remainder of the revels.

Peterchen cast a hurried glance at this



group, as his foot reached the ground, and then turning towards the thief-takers he made a sign for them to advance with their prisoners.

“Thy evil tongue has balked one of the most engaging rites of this day’s festival, knave;” observed the bailiff, addressing Pippo with a certain magisterial reproof in his voice. “I should do well to send thee to Berne, to serve a month among those who sweep the city streets as a punishment for thy raven throat. What, in the name of all thy Roman saints and idols, hadst thou against the happiness of these honest people, that thou must come, in this unseemly manner, to destroy it?”

“Nought but the love of truth, eccellenza, and a just horror of the man of blood.”

“That thou and all like thee should have a horror of the ministers of the law, I can understand; and it is more than probable that thy dislike will extend to me, for I am about to pronounce a just judgment on thee and thy

fellows for disturbing the harmony of the day, and especially for having been guilty of the enormous crime of an outrage on our agents."

"Couldst thou grant me a moment's leave?" asked the Genoese in his ear.

"An hour, noble Gaetano, if thou wilt."

The two then conversed apart, for a minute or more. During the brief dialogue, the Signor Grimaldi occasionally looked at the quiet and apparently contrite Maso, and stretched his arm towards the Lemman, in a way to give the observers an inkling of his subject. The countenance of the Herr Hofmeister changed from official sternness to an expression of decent concern as he listened, and ere long it took a decidedly forgiving laxity of muscle. When the other had done speaking, he bowed a ready assent to what he had just heard, and returned to the prisoners.

"As I have just observed," he resumed, "it is my duty now to pronounce finally on these men and their conduct. Firstly they are

strangers, and as such are not only ignorant of our laws, but entitled to our hospitality; next, they have been punished sufficiently for the original offence, by being abridged of the day's sports; and as to the crime committed against ourselves, in the person of our agents, it is freely forgiven, for forgiveness is a generous quality, and becomes a paternal form of rule. Depart therefore, of God's name! all of ye to a man, and remember henceforth to be discreet. Signore, and you, Herr Baron, shall we to the banquet?"

The two old friends had already moved onward, in close and earnest discourse, and the bailiff was obliged to seek out another companion. None offered, at the moment, but Sigismund, who had stood, since quitting the stage, in an attitude of complete indecision and helplessness, notwithstanding his great physical energy and his usual moral readiness to act. Taking the arm of the young soldier, with the disregard

of ceremony that denotes a sense of condescension, the bailiff drew him away from the spot, heedless himself of the other's reluctance, and without observing that, in consequence of the general desertion, for few were disposed to indulge their compassion unless it were in company with the honoured and noble, Adelheid was left absolutely alone with the family of Balthazar.

“This office of a headsman, Herr Sigismund,” commenced the unobservant Peterchen, too full of his own opinions, and much too sensible of his right to be delivered of them in the presence of his junior and inferior, to note the youth's trouble, “is at the best but a disgusting affair; though we, of station and authority, are obliged prudently to appear to deem it otherwise before the people, in our own interest. Thou hast had occasion to remark often, in the discipline of thy military followers, that a false colouring must be put upon things, lest they

who are very necessary to the state should not think the state quite so necessary to them. What is thy opinion, Captain Sigismund, as a man who has yet his hopes and his views on the softer sex, of this act of Jacques Colis?—Is it conduct to be approved of, or to be condemned?”

“ I deem him a heartless, mercenary, miscreant !”

The suppressed energy with which these unexpected words were uttered caused the bailiff to stop and to look up in his companion's face, as if to ask its reason. But there all was already calm, for the young man had too long been accustomed to drill its expression, when the sensitive sore of his origin was probed, as so frequently happened, to permit the momentary weakness long to maintain its ascendancy.

“ Ay, this is the opinion of thy years ;” resumed Peterchen. “ Thou art at a time of life when we esteem a pretty face and a mellow

eye of more account even than gold. But we put on our interested spectacles after thirty, and seldom see any thing very admirable, that is not at the same time very lucrative. Here is Melchior de Willading's daughter, now, a woman to set a city in a blaze, for she hath wit, and lands, and beauty, besides good blood ;—what, for instance, is thy opinion of her merit ?”

“ That she is deserving of all the happiness that every human excellence ought to confer !”

“ Hum—thou art nearer to thirty than I had thought thee, Herr Sigismund ! But touching this Balthazar, thou art not to believe, on account of the few words of grace which fell from me, that my aversion for the wretch is less than thine, or than that of any other honest man ; but it would be unseemly and unwise in a bailiff to desert the last minister of the law's decrees in the face of the public. There are feelings and sentiments

that are natural to us all, and among them are to be classed respect and honour for the well and nobly born," (the discourse was in German,) "and hatred and contempt for those who are condemned of men. These are feelings which belong to human nature itself, and God forbid that I, a man already past the age of romance, should really entertain any sentiments that are not strictly human."

"Do they not rather belong to abuses—to our prejudices?"

"The difference is not material, in a practical view, young man. That which is fairly bred into the mind, by discipline and habit, gets to be stronger than instinct, or even than one of the senses. Let there be an unseemly sight, or a foul smell near thee, and thou hast only to turn thy eyes, or hold thy nose, to be rid of it; but I could never find the means to lessen a prejudice that was once fairly seated in the mind. Thou mayest look whither thou wilt, and shut out the unsavoury odours of the

imagination by all the means thou canst invent, but if a man is, in truth, condemned of opinion, he might as well make his appeal to God at once for justice, as to any mercy he is likely to receive from men. This much have I learned in my experience as a public functionary."

"I should hope that these are not the legal dogmas of our ancient canton," returned the youth, conquering his feelings, though it cost him a severe effort.

"As far from it as Basle is from Coire. We hold no such discreditable doctrines. I challenge the world to show a state that possesses a fairer set of maxims than ourselves, and we even endeavour to make our practice chime in with our opinions, whenever it can be done in safety. No, in these particulars, Berne is a paragon of a community, and as rarely says one thing and does another, as any government you shall see. What I now tell thee, young man, is said to thee in the familiarity of a fête, as thou know'st, in which there



have been some fooleries, to open confidence and to loosen the tongue. We openly and loudly profess great truth and equality before the law, saving the city's rights, and take holy, heavenly, upright justice for our guide in all matters of theory. Himmel! If thou would'st have thy affair decided on principle, go before the councils, or the magistracy of the canton, and thou shalt hear such wisdom, and witness such keen-sightedness into chicanery, as would have honoured Solomon himself!"

"And notwithstanding this, prejudice is a general master."

"How can'st thou have it otherwise? Is not a man a man? Will he not lean as he has been weighed upon?—does not the tree grow in the way the twig is bent? No, while I adore justice, Herr Sigismund, as becomes a bailiff, I confess to both prejudice and partiality, mentally considered. Now, yonder maiden, the pretty Christine, lost some of her grace in my eyes, as no doubt she did in

thine, when the truth came to be known that she was Balthazar's child. The girl is fair, and modest, and winning in her way; but there is something—I cannot well tell thee what—but a certain damnable something—a taint—a colour—a hue—a—a—a—that showed her origin the instant I heard who was her parent—was it not so with thee?”

“When her origin was proved, but not previously.”

“Ay, of a certainty; I mean not otherwise. But a thing is not seen any the worse because it is seen thoroughly, although it may be seen falsely when there are false covers to conceal its ugliness. Particularity is necessary to philosophy. Ignorance is a mask to conceal the little details that are necessary to knowledge. Your Moor might pass for a Christian in a mask, but strip him of his covering and the true shade of the skin is seen. Didst thou not observe, for instance, in all that touches feminine grace and perfec-

tion, the manifest difference between the daughter of Melchior de Willading and the daughter of this Balthazar ?”

“ There was the difference between a maiden of most honoured and happy extraction and a maiden most miserably condemned !”

“ Nay, the Demoiselle de Willading is the fairer ?”

“ Nature has certainly been most bountiful to the heiress of Willading, Herr Bailiff, who is scarcely less attractive for her female grace and goodness, than she is fortunate in the accidents of birth and condition.”

“ I knew thou couldst not, in secret, be of a different mind from the rest of men !” exclaimed Peterchen in triumph, for he took the warmth of his companion’s manner to be a reluctant and half-concealed assent to his own proposition. Here the discourse ended : for, the earnest conference between Melchior and the Signor Grimaldi having terminated, the bailiff hastened to join his more important

guests, and Sigismund was released from an examination that had harrowed every feeling of his soul, while he even despised the besotted loquacity of the man who had been the instrument of his torture.

The separation of Adelheid from her father was anticipated and previously provided for ; since the men were expected to resort to the banquet at this hour. She had continued near Christine and her mother, therefore, without attracting any unusual attention to her movements, even in those who were the objects of her sympathy, a feeling that was so natural in one of her years and sex. A male attendant, in the livery of her father's house, remained near her person, a protector who was certain to insure not only her safety in the thronged streets of the town, but to exact from those whose faculties were beginning to yield to the excesses of the occasion the testimonials of respect that were due to her station. It was under these circumstances, then, that the more

honoured, and, to the eyes of the uninstructed, the happier of these maidens, approached the other, when curiosity was so far appeased as to have left the family of Balthazar nearly alone in the centre of the square.

“Is there no friendly roof near to which thou canst withdraw?” asked the heiress of Willading of the mother of the pallid and scarcely conscious Christine; “thou would’st do better to seek some shelter and privacy for thy unoffending and much injured child. If any that belong to me can be of service, I pray that thou wilt command as freely as if they were followers of thine own.”

Marguerite had never before spoken with a female of a rank superior to the ordinary classes. The ample means of both her father’s and her husband’s family had furnished all that was necessary to the improvement of the mind of one in her station, and perhaps she had been the gainer, in mere deportment, by having been greatly excluded, by their pre-

judices, from association with females of her own condition. As is often seen among those who have the thoughts without the conventional usages of a better caste in life, she was slightly tinctured with an exhibition of what might be termed an exaggerated manner, while at the same time it was perfectly free from vulgarity or coarseness. The gentle accents of Adelheid fell on her ear soothingly, and she gazed long and earnestly at the beautiful speaker without a reply.

“Who and what art thou, that can’st think a headsmen’s child may receive an insult that is unmerited, and who offerest the service of thy menials, as if the very vassal would not refuse his master’s bidding in our behalf !”

“I am Adelheid de Willading, the daughter of the baron of that name, and one much disposed to temper this cruel blow to the feelings of poor Christine. Suffer that my people seek the means to convey thy child to some other place !”

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support of her father's arm, and drew  
with a gaze of earnest and pleased  
to the blushing but still composed

She took the hand of the latter,  
a look of recognition and intelligence,  
ly, as if communing with herself,  
an speaking to another—

is getting to be intelligible!" she  
ed; "there is still gratitude and cre-  
eling in the world. I can understand  
are not revolting to this fair being:  
sense of justice that is stronger than  
judices. We have done her service,  
is not ashamed of the source whence it  
ow!"

heart of Adelheid throbbed quick and  
ly; and, for a moment, she doubted her  
to command her feelings. But the  
ing conviction that Sigismund had been  
rable and delicate, even in his most  
d and confidential communications with  
own mother, came to relieve her, and to



make her momentarily happy ; since nothing is so painful to the pure of mind, as to think those they love have acted unworthily ; or nothing so grateful, as the assurance that they merit the esteem we have been induced liberally and confidently to bestow.

“ You do me no more than justice,” returned the pleased listener of this flattering and seemingly involuntary opinion—“ we are indeed—indeed we are truly grateful ; but had we not reason for the sacred obligations of gratitude, I think we could still be just. Will you not now consent that my people should aid you ? ”

“ This is not necessary, lady. Send away thy followers, for their presence will draw unpleasant observations on our movements. The town is now occupied with the feasts, and, as we have not blindly overlooked the necessity of a retreat for the hunted and persecuted, we will take the opportunity to withdraw unseen. As for thyself—”

"I would be near this innocent at a moment so trying;"—added Adelheid earnestly, and with that visible sympathy which rarely fails to meet an echo.

"Heaven bless thee! Heaven bless thee, sweet girl! And Heaven will bless thee, for few wrongs go unrequited in this life, and little good without its reward. Send thy followers away, or if thy habits require their watchfulness, let them be near unseen, whilst thou watchest our movements, and when the eyes of all are turned on their own pleasures, thou canst follow. Heaven bless thee—ay, and Heaven will!"

Marguerite then led her daughter towards one of the least frequented streets. She was accompanied by the silent Balthazar, and closely watched by one of the menials of Adelheid. When fairly housed, the domestic returned to show the spot to his mistress, who had appeared to occupy herself with the hundred silly devices that were invented to amuse

the multitude. Dismissing her attendants, with an order to remain at hand, however, the heiress of Willading soon found means to enter the humble abode in which the proscribed family had taken refuge, and, as she was expected, she was soon introduced into the chamber where Christine and her mother had taken refuge.

The sympathy of the young and tender Adelheid was precious to one of the character of Christine. They wept together, for the weakness of her sex prevailed over the pride of the former, when she found herself unrestrained by the observation of the world, and she gave way to the torrent of feeling that broke through its bounds, in spite of her endeavours to control it. Marguerite was the only spectator of this silent but intelligible communion between these two young and pure spirits, and her soul was shaken by the unlooked-for commiseration of one so honoured, and who was usually esteemed so happy.

“Thou hast the consciousness of our wrongs,” she said, when the first burst of emotion had a little subsided. “Thou canst then believe that a headsman’s child is like the offspring of another, and is not to be hunted of men like the young of a wolf.”

“Mother, this is the Baron de Willading’s heiress;” said Christine: “would she come here, did she not pity us?”

“Yes, she can pity us;—and yet I find it hard even to be pitied! Sigismund has told us of her goodness, and she may, in truth, feel for the wretched!”

The allusion to her son caused the temples of Adelheid to burn like fire, while there was a chill, resembling that of death, at her heart. The first arose from the quick and uncontrollable alarm of female sensitiveness; the last was owing to the shock inseparable from being presented with this vivid, palpable picture of Sigismund’s close affinity with the family of an executioner. She could have better borne it,

had Marguerite spoken of her son less familiarly, or with more of that feigned ignorance of each other, which, without stopping to scan its fitness, she had been led to think existed between the young man and his family.

“Mother!” exclaimed Christine reproachfully, and in surprise, as if a great indiscretion had been thoughtlessly committed.

“It matters not, child; it matters not. I saw by the kindling eye of Sigismund to-day, that our secret will not much longer be kept. The noble boy must show more energy than those who have gone before him: he must quit for ever a country in which he was condemned, even before he was born.”

“I shall not deny that your connexion with Monsieur Sigismund is known to me;” said Adelheid, summoning all her resolution to make an avowal which put her at once into the confidence of Balthazar’s family. “You are acquainted with the heavy debt of gra-

titude we owe your son, and it will explain the nature of the interest I now feel in your wrongs."

The keen eye of Marguerite studied the crimsoned features of Adelheid till forgetfulness got the better of discretion. The search was anxious, rather than triumphant, the feeling most dreaded by its subject; and, when her eyes were withdrawn, the mother of the youth became thoughtful and pensive. This expressive communion produced a deep and embarrassing silence, which each would gladly have broken, had they not both been irresistibly tongue-tied by the rapidity and intensity of their thoughts.

"We know that Sigismund hath been of service to thee," observed Marguerite, who always addressed her gay companion with the familiarity that belonged to her greater age, rather than with the respect which Adelheid had been accustomed to receive from those who

were of a rank inferior to her own. "The brave boy hath spoken of it, though he hath spoken of it modestly."

"He had every right to do himself justice in his communications with those of his own family. Without his aid, my father would have been childless; and without his brave support, the child fatherless. Twice has he stood between us and death."

"I have heard of this," returned Marguerite, again fastening her penetrating eye on the tell-tale features of Adelheid, which never failed to brighten and glow, whenever there was allusion to the courage and self-devotion of him she secretly loved. "As to what thou say'st of the intimacy of our poor boy with those of his blood, cruel circumstances stand between us and our wishes. If Sigismund has told thee of whom he comes, he has also most probably told thee of the manner in which he passes, in the world, for that which he is not."

“ I believe he has not withheld any thing that he knew, and which it was proper to communicate to me ;” answered Adelheid, dropping her eyes before the attentive, expectant look of Marguerite. “ He has spoken freely, and——”

“ Thou wouldst have said——”

“ Honourably, and as became a soldier ;” continued Adelheid firmly.

“ He has done well ! This lightens my heart of one burthen at least. No ; God has destined us to this fate, and it would have grieved me that a son of mine should have failed of principle in an affair, of all others, in which it is most wanted. You look amazed, lady !”

“ These sentiments, in one so situated, surprise as much as they delight me, ! If any thing could excuse some looseness in the manner of regarding the usual ties of life, it would surely be to find oneself so placed, by no misconduct of our own, as to be a butt to the



world's dislike and injustice; and yet here, where there was reason to expect some resentment against fortune, I meet with sentiments that would honour a throne!"

"Thou thinkest as one more accustomed to consider thy fellow-creatures through the means of what men fancy, than through things as they are. . This is the picture of youth, and inexperience, and innocence; but it is not the picture of life. 'Tis misfortune, and not prosperity that chasteneth, by proving our insufficiency for true happiness, and by leading the soul to depend on a power greater than any that is to be found on earth. We fall before the temptation of happiness, when we rise in adversity. If thou thinkest, innocent one, that noble and just sentiments belong to the fortunate, thou trustest to a false guide. There are evils which flesh cannot endure, it is true; but, removed from these overwhelming wants, we are strongest in the right, when least tempted by vanity and ambition. More starving beg-

gars abstain from stealing the crust they crave, than pampered gluttons deny themselves the luxury that kills them. They that live under the rod see and dread the hand that holds it; they who riot in earth's glories, come at last to think they deserve the short-lived distinctions they enjoy. When thou goest down into the depths of misery, thou hast nought to fear except the anger of God! It is when raised above others that thou should'st tremble most for thine own safety."

"This is not the manner in which the world is used to reason."

"Because the world is governed by those whose interest it is to pervert truth to their own objects, and not by those whose duties run hand-in-hand with the right. But we will say no more of this, lady; here is one that feels too acutely just now to admit truth to be too freely spoken."

"Do'st feel thyself better and more able to listen to thy friends, dear Christine?" asked

Adelheid, taking the hand of the repudiated and deserted girl with the tenderness of an affectionate sister.

Until now the sufferer had only spoken the few words related, in mild reproof of her mother's indiscretion. That little had been uttered with parched lips and a choked voice, while the hue of her features was deadly pale, and her whole countenance betrayed intense mental anguish. But this display of interest in one of her own years and sex, of whose excellencies she had been accustomed to hear such fervid descriptions from the warm-hearted Sigismund, and of whose sincerity she was assured by the subtle and quick instinct that unites the innocent and young, caused a quick and extreme change in her sensibilities. The grief which had been struggling and condensed, now flowed more freely from her eyes, and she threw herself, sobbing and weeping, in a paroxysm of gentle, but overwhelming, feeling, on the bosom of this new found friend. The experi-

enced Marguerite smiled at this manifestation of kindness on the part of Adelheid, though even this expression of satisfaction was austere and regulated in one who had so long stood at bay with the world. And, after a short pause, she left the room, under the belief that such a communion with a spirit, pure and inexperienced as her own, a communion so unusual to her daughter, would be more likely to produce a happy effect, if left to themselves, than when restrained by her presence.

The two girls wept in common, for a long time after Marguerite had disappeared. This intercourse, chastened as it was by sorrow, and rendered endearing on the one side by a confiding ingenuousness, and on the other by generous pity, caused both to live in that short period, as it were, months together in a near and dear intimacy. Confidence is not always the growth of time. There are minds that meet each other with a species of affinity that resembles the cohesive property of matter, and with a promp-

titude and faith that only belongs to the purer essence of which they are composed. But when this attraction of the ethereal part of the being is aided by the feelings that have been warmed by an interest so tender as that which the hearts of both the maidens felt in a common object, its power is not only stronger, but quicker, in making itself felt. So much was already known by each of the other's character, fortunes, and hopes (always with the exception of Adelheid's most sacred secret, which Sigismund cherished as a deposit by far too sacred to be shared even with his sister) that the meeting under no circumstances could have been that of strangers, and their mutual knowledge came as an assistant to break down the barriers of those forms which were so irksome to their longings for a freer interchange of feeling and thought. Adelheid possessed too much intellectual tact to have recourse to the every-day language of consolation. When she did speak, which, as became her superior rank and less embarrassed situation, she was

the first to do, it was in general but friendly allusions.

“Thou wilt go with us to Italy, in the morning,” she said, drying her eyes; “my father quits Blonay, in company with the Signor Grimaldi, with to-morrow’s sun, and thou wilt be of our company?”

“Where thou wilt—anywhere with thee—anywhere to hide my shame!”

The blood mounted to the temples of Adelheid, her air even appeared imposing to the eyes of the artless and unpractised Christine, as she answered—

“Shame is a word that applies to the mean and mercenary, to the vile and unfaithful,” she said with womanly and virtuous indignation; “but not to thee, love.”

“Oh! do not, do not condemn him;” whispered Christine, covering her face with her hands. “He has found himself unequal to bearing the burthen of our degradation, and he should be spoken of in pity rather than with hatred.”

Adelheid was silent; but she regarded the poor trembling girl, whose head now nestled in her bosom, with melancholy concern.

“ Did'st thou know him well ?” she asked in a low tone, following rather the chain of her own thoughts, than reflecting on the nature of the question she put. “ I had hoped that this refusal would bring no other pain than the unavoidable mortification which I fear belongs to the weakness of our sex and our habits.”

“ Thou knowest not how dear preference is to the despised !—how cherished the thought of being loved becomes to those, who, out of their own narrow limits of natural friends, have been accustomed to meet only with contempt and aversion ! Thou hast always been known, and courted, and happy ! Thou can'st not know how dear it is to the despised to seem even to be preferred !”

“ Nay, say not this, I pray thee !” answered Adelheid, hurriedly, and with a throb of an-

guish at her heart, "there is little in this life that speaks fairly for itself. We are not always what we seem: and if we were, and far more miserable than any thing but vice can make us, there is another state of being, in which justice—pure, unalloyed justice—will be done."

"I will go with thee to Italy," answered Christine, looking calm and resolved, while a glow of holy hope bloomed on each cheek; "when all is over, we will go together to a happier world!"

Adelheid folded the stricken and sensitive plant to her bosom. Again they wept together, but it was with a milder and sweeter sorrow than before.



## CHAPTER XI.

I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries.

*Tempest.*

THE day dawned clear and cloudless on the Léman, the morning that succeeded the Abbaye des Vignerons. Hundreds among the frugal and time-saving Swiss had left the town before the appearance of the light, and many strangers were crowding into the barks, as the sun came bright and cheerfully over the rounded and smiling summits of the neighbouring côtes. At this early hour, all in and around the rock-seated castle of Blonay were astir, and in motion. Menials were running with hurried air, from room to room, from

court to terrace, and from lawn to tower. The peasants in the adjoining fields rested on their utensils of husbandry, in gaping, admiring attention to the preparations of their superiors. For though we are not writing of a strictly feudal age, the events it is our business to record took place long before the occurrence of those great political events, which have since so materially changed the social state of Europe. Switzerland was then a sealed country to most of those who dwelt even in the adjoining nations, and the present advanced condition of roads and inns was quite unknown, not only to these mountaineers, but throughout the rest of what was then much more properly called the exclusively civilized portion of the globe, than it is to-day. Even horses were not often trusted in the passage of the Alps, but recourse was had to the surer-footed mule by the traveller, and, not unfrequently, by the more practised carrier and smuggler of those rude paths. Roads existed, it is true, as in other parts of Europe,

in the countries of the plain, if any portion of the great undulating surface of that region deserve the name, but once within the mountains, with the exception of very inartificial wheel-tracks in the straitened and glen-like valleys, the hoof alone was to be trusted or indeed used.

The long train of travellers, then, that left the gates of Blonay just as the fog began to stir on the wide alluvial meadows of the Rhone were all in the saddle. A courier, accompanied by a sumpter-mule had departed over-night to prepare the way for those who were to follow, and active young mountaineers had succeeded, from time to time, charged with different orders, issued in behalf of their comforts.

As the cavalcade passed beneath the arch of the great gate, the lively, spirit-stirring horn sounded a farewell air, to which custom had attached the signification of good wishes. It took the way towards the level of the Lemman by means of a winding and picturesque bridle-

path that led, among alpine meadows, groves, rocks, and hamlets, fairly to the water-side. Roger de Blonay and his two principal guests, rode in front, the former seated on a war-horse that he had ridden years before as a soldier, and the two latter well mounted on beasts prepared for, and accustomed to, the mountains. Adelheid and Christine came next, riding by themselves, in the modest reserve of their maiden condition. Their discourse was low, confidential, and renewed at intervals. A few menials followed, and then came Sigismund at the side of the Signor Grimaldi's friend and one of the family of Blonay, the latter of whom was destined to return with the baron, after doing honour to their guests by seeing them as far as Villeneuve. The rear was brought up by muleteers, domestics, and those who led the beasts that bore the baggage. All of the former who intended to cross the Alps carried the fire-arms of the period at their saddle-bows, and each had his rapier, his *couteau de*

*chasse*, or his weapon of more military fashion, so disposed about his person as to denote it was considered an arm for whose use some occasion might possibly occur.

As the departure from Blonay was unaccompanied by any of those leave-takings which usually impress a touch of melancholy on the traveller, most of the cavalcade, as they issued into the pure and exhilarating air of the morning, were sufficiently disposed to enjoy the loveliness of the landscape, and to indulge in the cheerfulness and delight that a scene so glorious is apt to awaken, in all who are alive to the beauties of nature.

Adelheid gladly pointed out to her companion the various objects of the view, as a means of recalling the thoughts of Christine from her own particular griefs, which were heightened by regret for the loss of her mother, from whom she was now seriously separated for the first time in her life, since their communications, though secret, had been constant during the years she

had dwelt under another roof. The latter gratefully lent herself to the kind intentions of her new friend, and endeavoured to be pleased with all she beheld, though it was such pleasure as the sad and mourning admit with a jealous reservation of their own secret causes of woe.

“Yonder tower, towards which we advance, is Châtelard,” said the heiress of Willading to the daughter of Balthazar, in the pursuit of her kind intention; “a hold, nearly as ancient and honourable as this we have just quitted, though not so constantly the dwelling of the same family; for these of Blonay have been a thousand years dwellers on the same rock, always favourably known for their faith and courage.”

“Surely, if there is anything in life that can compensate for its every-day evils,” observed Christine, in a manner of mild regret and perhaps with the perversity of grief, “it must be to have come from those who have always been known and honoured among the great and

happy ! Even virtue, and goodness, and great deeds, scarce give a respect like that we feel for the Sire de Blonay, whose family has been seated, as thou hast just said, a thousand years on that rock above us !”

Adelheid was mute. She appreciated the feeling which had so naturally led her companion to a reflection like this, and she felt the difficulty of applying balm to a wound as deep as that which had been inflicted on her companion.

“ We are not always to suppose those the most happy that the world most honours,” she at length answered “ the respect to which we are accustomed comes in time to be necessary, without being a source of pleasure ; and the hazard of incurring its loss is more than equal to the satisfaction of its possession.”

“ Thou wilt at least admit that to be despised and shunned is a curse to which nothing can reconcile us.”

“ We will speak now of other things, dear.

It may be long ere either of us again sees this grand display of rock and water, of brown mountain and shining glacier ; we will not prove ourselves ungrateful for the happiness we have, by repining for that which is impossible."

Christine quietly yielded to the kind intention of her new friend, and they rode on in silence, picking their way along the winding path, until the whole party, after a long but pleasant descent, reached the road, which is nearly washed by the waters of the lake. There has already been allusion, in the earlier pages of our work, to the extraordinary beauties of the route near this extremity of the Lemman. After climbing to the height of the mild and healthful Montreux, the cavalcade again descended, under a canopy of nut-trees, to the gate of Chillon, and sweeping around the margin of the sheet, it reached Villeneuve by the hour that had been named for an early morning repast. Here all dismounted, and refreshed themselves awhile, when Roger de Blonay



and his attendants, after many exchanges of warm and sincere good wishes, took their final leave.

The sun was scarcely yet visible in the deep glens, when those who were destined for St. Bernard were again in the saddle. The road now necessarily left the lake, traversing those broad alluvial bottoms which have been deposited during thirty centuries by the washings of the Rhone, aided, if faith is to be given to geological symptoms and to ancient traditions, by certain violent convulsions of nature. For several hours our travellers rode amid such a deep fertility, and such a luxuriance of vegetation, that their path bore more analogy to an excursion on the wide plains of Lombardy, than to one amid the usual Swiss scenery ; although, unlike the boundless expanse of the Italian garden, the view was limited on each side by perpendicular barriers of rock, that were piled for thousands of feet into the heavens, and which were merely separated from each other

by a league or two, a distance that dwindled to miles in its effect on the eye, a consequence of the grandeur of the scale on which nature has reared these vast piles.

It was high-noon when Melchior de Willading and his venerable friend led the way across the foaming Rhone, at the celebrated bridge of St. Maurice. Here the country of the Valais, then, like Geneva, an ally, and not a confederate, of the Swiss cantons, was entered, and all objects, both animate and inanimate, began to assume that mixture of the grand, the sterile, the luxuriant, and the revolting, for which this region is so generally known. Adelheid gave an involuntary shudder, her imagination having been prepared by rumour for even more than the truth would have given reason to expect, when the gate of St. Maurice swung back upon its hinges, literally enclosing the party in this wild, desolate, and yet romantic region. As they proceeded along the Rhone, however, she and those of her com-

panions to whom the scene was new, were constantly wondering at some unlooked-for discrepancy, that drove them from admiration to disgust — from the exclamations of delight to the chill of disappointment. The mountains on every side were dreary, and without the rich relief of the pastured eminences, but most of the valley was rich and generous. In one spot a *sac d'eau*, one of those reservoirs of water which form among the glaciers on the summits of the rocks, had broken, and, descending like a water-spout, it had swept before it every vestige of cultivation, covering wide breadths of the meadows with a *débris* that resembled chaos. A frightful barrenness, and the most smiling fertility, were in absolute contact: patches of green, that had been accidentally favoured by some lucky formation of the ground, sometimes appearing like oases of the desert, in the very centre of a sterility that would put the labour and the art of man at defiance for a century. In the midst of this

terrific picture of want sat a crétin, with his semi-human attributes, the lolling tongue, the blunted faculties, and the degraded appetites, to complete the desolation. Issuing from this belt of annihilated vegetation, the scene became again as pleasant as the fancy could desire, or the eye crave. Fountains leaped from rock to rock in the sun's rays; the valley was green and gentle; the mountains began to show varied and pleasing forms; and happy smiling faces appeared, whose freshness and regularity were perhaps of a cast superior to that of most of the Swiss. In short, the Valais was then, as now, a country of opposite extremes, but in which, perhaps, there is a predominance of the repulsive and inhospitable.

It was fairly nightfall, notwithstanding the trifling distance they had journeyed, when the travellers reached Martigny, where dispositions had previously been made for their reception during the hours of sleep. Here preparations were made to seek their rest at an early hour,

in order to be in readiness for the fatiguing toil of the following day.

Martigny is situated at the point where the great valley of the Rhone changes its direction from a north and south to an east and west course, and it is the spot whence three of the celebrated mountain paths diverge, to make as many passages of the upper Alps. Here are the two routes of the great and little St. Bernard, both of which lead into Italy, and that of the Col-de-Balme, which crosses a spur of the Alps into Savoy toward the celebrated valley of Chamouni. It was the intention of the Baron de Willading and his friend to journey by the former of these roads, as has so often been mentioned in these pages, their destination being the capital of Piedmont. The passage of the great St. Bernard, though so long known by its ancient and hospitable convent, the most elevated habitation in Europe, and in these later times so famous for the passage of a conquering army, is but a second-

any alpine pass, considered in reference to the grandeur of its scenery. The ascent, so inartificial even to this hour, is long and comparatively without danger, and in general it is sufficiently direct, there being no very precipitous rise like those of the Gemmi, the Grimsel, and various other passes in Switzerland and Italy, except at the very neck, or col, of the mountain, where the rock is to be literally climbed on the rude and broad steps that so frequently occur among the paths of the Alps and the Apennines. The fatigue of this passage comes, therefore, rather from its length, and the necessity of unremitted diligence, than from any excessive labour demanded by the ascent; and the reputation acquired by the great captain of our age, in leading an army across its summit, has been obtained more by the military combinations of which it formed the principal feature, the boldness of the conception, and the secrecy and promptitude with which so extensive an operation was effected,

than by the physical difficulties that were overcome. In the latter particular, the passage of St. Bernard, as this celebrated coup-de-main is usually called, has frequently been outdone in our own wilds; for armies have often traversed regions of broad streams, broken mountains, and uninterrupted forests, for weeks at a time, in which the mere bodily labour of any given number of days would be found to be greater than that endured on this occasion by the followers of Napoleon. The estimate we attach to every exploit is so dependent on the magnitude of its results, that men rarely come to a perfectly impartial judgment on its merits; the victory or defeat, however simple or bloodless, that shall shake or assure the interests of civilized society, being always esteemed by the world an event of greater importance, than the happiest combinations of thought and valour that affect only the welfare of some remote and unknown people. By the just consideration of this truth, we come to understand the value of a nation's

possessing confidence in itself, extensive power, and a unity commensurate to its means; since small and divided states waste their strength in acts too insignificant for general interest, frittering away their mental riches, no less than their treasure and blood, in supporting interests that fail to enlist the sympathies of any beyond the pale of their own borders. The nation which, by the adverse circumstances of numerical inferiority, poverty of means, failure of enterprise, or want of opinion, cannot sustain its own citizens in the acquisition of a just renown, is deficient in one of the first and most indispensable elements of greatness; glory, like riches, feeding itself, and being most apt to be found where its fruits have already accumulated. We see, in this fact, among other conclusions, the importance of an acquisition of such habits of manliness of thought, as will enable us to decide on the merits and demerits of what is done among ourselves, and of shaking off that dependence on others which it is too much the



custom of some among us to dignify with the pretending title of deference to knowledge and taste, but which, in truth, possesses some such share of true modesty and diffidence, as the footman is apt to exhibit when exulting in the renown of his master.

This little digression has induced us momentarily to overlook the incidents of the tale. Few who possess the means, venture into the stormy regions of the upper Alps, at the late season in which the present party reached the hamlet of Martigny, without seeking the care of one or more suitable guides. The services of these men are useful in a variety of ways, but in none more than in offering the advice which long familiarity with the signs of the heavens, the temperature of the air, and the direction of the winds, enables them to give. The Baron de Willading, and his friend immediately despatched a messenger for a mountaineer, of the name of Pierre Dumont, who enjoyed a fair name for fidelity, and who was believed to be better

acquainted with all the difficulties of the ascent and descent, than any other who journeyed among the glens of that part of the Alps. At the present day, when hundreds ascend to the convent from curiosity alone, every peasant of sufficient strength and intelligence becomes a guide, and the little community of the lower Valais finds the transit of the idle and rich such a fruitful source of revenue, that it has been induced to regulate the whole by very useful and just ordinances; but at the period of the tale, this Pierre was the only individual, who, by fortunate concurrences, had obtained a name among affluent foreigners, and who was at all in demand with that class of travellers. He was not long in presenting himself in the public room of the inn—a hale, florid, muscular man of sixty, with every appearance of permanent health and vigour, but with a slight and nearly imperceptible difficulty of breathing.

“Thou art Pierre Dumont?” observed the baron, studying the open physiognomy and

well-set frame of the Valaisan, with satisfaction. "Thou hast been mentioned by more than one traveller in his book."

The stout mountaineer raised himself in pride, and endeavoured to acknowledge the compliment in the manner of his well-meant but rude courtesy; for refinement did not then extend its finesse and its deceit among the glens of Switzerland.

"They have done me honour, Monsieur," he said; "it has been my good fortune to cross the Col with many brave gentlemen and fair ladies—and in two instances with princes." (Though a sturdy republican, Pierre was not insensible to worldly rank.) "The pious monks know me well; and they who enter the convent are not the worse received for being my companions. I shall be glad to lead so fair a party from our cold valley into the sunny glens of Italy, for, if truth must be spoken, nature has placed us on the wrong side of the mountain for our

comfort, though we have our advantage over those who live even in Turin and Milan, in matters of greater importance."

"What can be the superiority of a Valaisan, over the Lombard, or the Piedmontese?" demanded the Signor Grimaldi quickly, like a man who was curious to hear the reply. "A traveller should seek all kind of knowledge, and I take this to be a newly-discovered fact."

"Liberty, Signore! We are our own masters; we have been so since the day when our fathers sacked the castles of the barons, and compelled their tyrants to become their equals. I think of this each time I reach the warm plains of Italy, and return to my cottage a more contented man, for the reflection."

"Spoken like a Swiss, though it is uttered by only an ally of the cantons!" cried Melchior de Willading, heartily. "This is the spirit, Gaetano, which sustains our mountaineers, and

renders them more happy amid their frosts and rocks, than thy Genoese on his warm and glowing bay."

"The word liberty, Melchior, is more used than understood, and as much abused as used;" returned the Signor Grimaldi gravely. "A country on which God hath laid his finger in displeasure as heavily as on this, needs have some such consolation as the phantom with which the honest Pierre appears to be so well satisfied.—But, Signor guide, have many travellers tried the passage of late, and what dost thou think of our prospects in making the attempt? We hear gloomy tales, sometimes, of thy alpine paths in that Italy thou hold'st so cheap."

"Your pardon, noble Signore, if the frankness of a mountaineer has carried me too far. I do not undervalue your Piedmont, because I love our Valais more. A country may be excellent, even though another should be better. As for the travellers, none of note have gone

up to the Col of late, though there have been the usual number of vagabonds and adventurers. The savour of the convent kitchen will reach the noses of these knaves here in the valley, though we have a long twelve leagues to journey in getting from the one to the other."

The Signor Grimaldi waited until Adelheid and Christine, who were preparing to retire for the night, were out of hearing, and he resumed his questions.

"Thou hast not spoken of the weather?"

"We are in one of the most uncertain and treacherous months of the good season, Messieurs. The winter is gathering among the upper Alps, and in a month in which the frosts are flying about like uneasy birds that do not know where to alight, one can hardly say whether he hath need of his cloak or not."

"San Francesco! Dost think I am dallying with thee, friend, about a thickness more or less of cloth! I am hinting at avalanches and falling rocks—at whirlwinds and tempests!"

Pierre laughed and shook his head, though he answered vaguely as became his business.

“These are Italian opinions of our hills, Signore,” he said; “they savour of the imagination. Our pass is not as often troubled with the avalanche as some that are known, even in the melting snows. Had you looked at the peaks from the lake, you would have seen that, the hoary glaciers excepted, they are still all brown and naked. The snow must fall from the heavens before it can fall in the avalanche, and we are yet, I think, a few days from the true winter.”

“Thy calculations are made with nicety, friend,” returned the Genoese, not sorry, however, to hear the guide speak with so much apparent confidence of the weather, “and we are obliged to thee in proportion. What of the travellers thou hast named? Are there brigands on our path?”

“Such rogues have been known to infest the place, but, in general, there is too little

to be gained for the risk. Your rich traveller is not an every-day sight among our rocks ; and you well know, Signore, that there may be too few, as well as too many, on a path, for your freebooter."

The Italian was distrustful by habit on all such subjects, and he threw a quick suspicious glance at the guide. But the frank open countenance of Pierre removed all doubt of his honesty, to say nothing of the effect of a well-established reputation.

"But thou hast spoken of certain vagabonds who have preceded us?"

"In that particular, matters might be better ;" answered the plain-minded mountaineer, dropping his head into an attitude of meditation so naturally expressed as to give additional weight to his words. "Many of bad appearance have certainly gone up to-day ; such as a Neapolitan named Pippo, who is any thing but a saint — a certain pilgrim, who will be nearer heaven at the convent than he will



be at the death—St. Pierre pray for me if I do the man injustice!—and one or two more of the same brood. There is another that hath gone up also, post haste, and with good reason as they say, for he hath made himself the butt of all the jokers in Vévay on account of some foolery in the games of the Abbaye—a certain Jacques Colis.”

The name was repeated by several near the speaker.

“The same, Messieurs. It would seem that the Sieur Colis would fain take a maiden to wife in the public sports, and, when her birth came to be known, that his bride was no other than the child of Balthazar, the common headsman of Berne!”

A general silence betrayed the embarrassment of most of the listeners.

“And that tale hath already reached this glen,” said Sigismund, in a tone so deep and firm as to cause Pierre to start, while the

two old nobles looked in another direction, feigning not to observe what was passing.

“Rumour hath a nimbler foot than a mule, young officer;” answered the honest guide. “The tale, as you call it, will have travelled across the mountains sooner than they who bore it—though I never knew how such a miracle could come to pass—but so it is; report goes faster than the tongue that spreads it, and if there be a little untruth to help it along, the wind itself is scarcely swifter. Honest Jacques Colis has bethought him to get the start of his story, but, my life on it, though he is active enough in getting away from his mockers, that he finds it, with all the additions, safely housed in the inn at Turin when he reaches that city himself.”

“These, then, are all?” interrupted the Signore Grimaldi, who saw, by the heaving bosom of Sigismund, that it was time in mercy to interpose.

“Not so, Signore—there is still another,

and one I like less than any. A countryman of your own who impudently enough calls himself *Il Maledetto*."

"Maso!"

"The very same."

"Honest, courageous Maso, and his noble dog!"

"Signore, you describe the man so well in some things, that I wonder you know so little of him in others. Maso hath not his equal on the road for activity and courage, and the beast is second only to our mastiffs of the convent for the same qualities; but when you speak of the master's honesty, you speak of that for which the world gives him little credit, and do great disparagement to the brute, which is much the best of the two, in this respect."

"This may be true enough," rejoined the Signor Grimaldi, turning anxiously towards his companions:—"man is a strange compound of good and evil; his acts when left to natural impulses are so different from what they be-

come on calculation, that one can scarcely answer for a man of Maso's temperament. We know him to be a most efficient friend, and such a man would be apt to make a very dangerous enemy ! His qualities were not given to him by halves. And yet we have a strong circumstance in our favour; for he who hath once done the last service to a fellow creature feels a sort of paternity in him he hath saved, and would be little likely to rob himself of the pleasure of knowing, that there are some of his kind who owe him a grateful recollection."

This remark was answered by Melchior de Willading in the same spirit, and the guide, perceiving he was no longer wanted, withdrew.

Soon after the travellers retired to rest.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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